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JUSTICE, NOT COMPASSION, FOR LIBERIA

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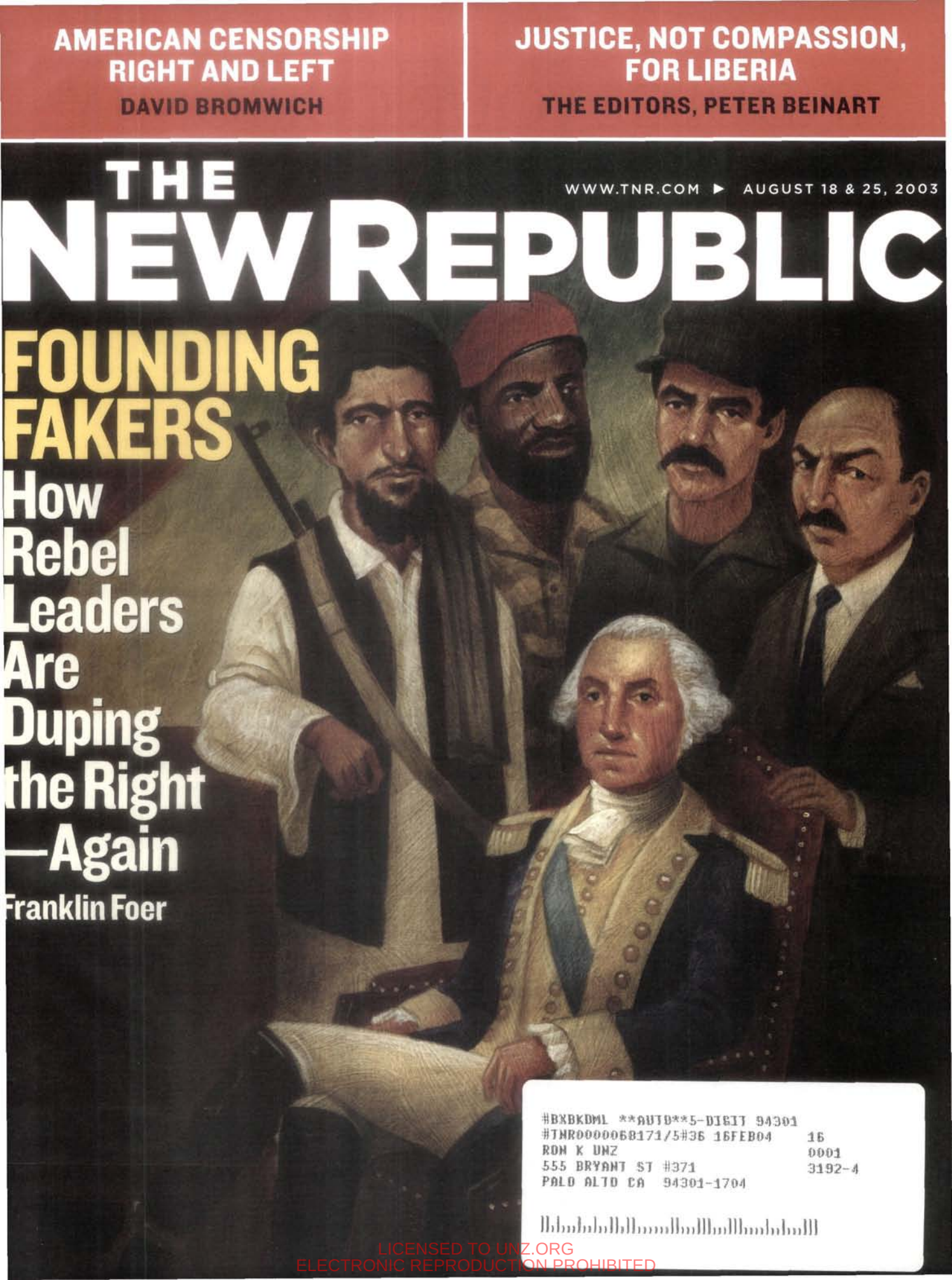

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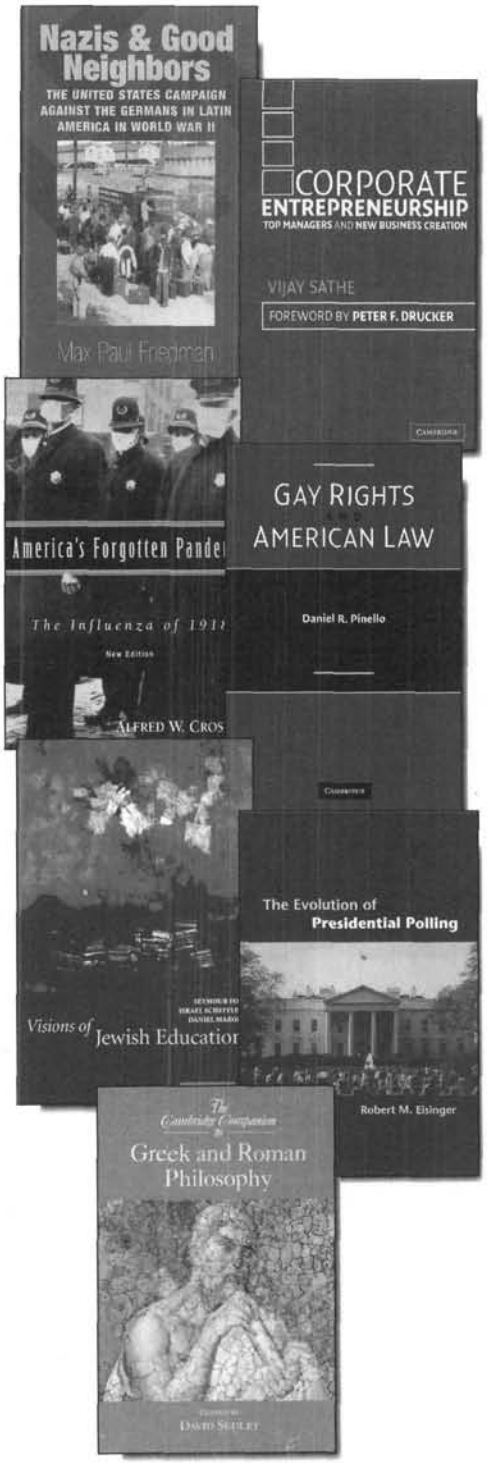
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MALCONTEXT

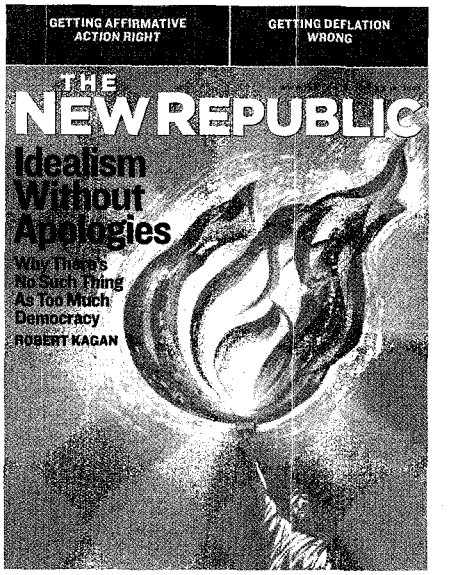
SEVERAL REVIEWERS OF MY BOOK, *The Future of Freedom*, have noted that its thesis, in Niall Ferguson's phrase, "is easily misrepresented." In fact, so far virtually all discussion of it, favorable or not, has been fair. Robert Kagan makes up for all that ("The Ungreat Washed," July 7 & 14).

My book explores why liberal democracy came first to the Western world, why it has been so rare elsewhere, and what can be learned from the important exceptions to this rule. As is only natural given such a large topic, many points in it can be debated. What cannot be, however, is the book's clear and oft-stated goal: to help find a path toward genuine liberal democracy for countries everywhere and to reinvigorate it here in the United States. In a generally critical review in the *Financial Times* of London, THE NEW REPUBLIC's Lawrence F. Kaplan writes that the book "is no reactionary tome. It is a plea for attention to be paid first to liberal democracy's 'inner stuffing'—the governing institutions, market systems, civil societies and, yes, restraints on popular will."

Yet, rather than engage the book in front of him, Kagan constructs a straw man and proceeds to beat it vigorously and venomously. He tries to portray the work as a paean to tyranny and aristocracy—a mischaracterization so perverse that it can be sustained only through selective or manipulated quotations, ad hominem innuendo, and outright falsehoods. The signature element of Kagan's review is not intellectual disagreement, which I welcome. It is intellectual dishonesty.

A few examples, chosen almost at random:

1. Kagan writes that I believe, "[i]n the realm of politics, 'the quality of political leadership has declined.' Fifty years ago the nation had Dwight D. Eisenhower; today it has George W. Bush—thus Zakaria quotes an unnamed 'scholar in his eighties.' ('We were having lunch in the paneled dining room of one of New York City's grand clubs.')"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GETTING DEFLATION WRONG
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Idealism Without Apologies
Why There's No Such Thing As Too Much Democracy
ROBERT KAGAN

What the book actually says, however, is this: "The idea that the quality of political leadership has declined ... occupies a powerful place in the public imagination. A scholar in his eighties put it to me [that once there were men like Roosevelt and Eisenhower, now there are Gephardt and Bush]. (We were having lunch in the paneled dining room of one of New York City's grand clubs, a perfect setting for misty nostalgia.) But [the scholar's] youth, in the 1930s and 1940s, was dominated by the Great Depression and World War II. Difficult times bring out great leaders. In fact they bring out the best in most of us. Consider how September 11

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transformed George W. Bush and much of the country. ... *From a broader historical perspective, the notion that today's politicians are any worse than the norm is silly. Few people pine for the good old days when Rutherford B. Hayes or Millard Fillmore was president.*" (Emphasis mine.)

2. Commenting on my observation that some autocrats (mostly in East Asia) modernized their economies, a move that over time led to successful democratization, Kagan writes, "This is a bizarre notion. None of these dictators had the slightest intention of preparing their countries for genuine freedom and real democratic rule."

What the book actually says is this: "As in Europe, the autocrats didn't think they were democratizing. But by spurring growth and modernity, they unleashed forces that they couldn't contain." I quote the historian Philip Nord, who noted that "[d]ictatorships believe they want growth but actually make a serious mistake in fostering it." And later, I note that "[a]ll liberalizing autocrats have believed that they can, like Lee [Kuan Yew], achieve modernity but delay democracy. But they can't."

3. Kagan writes that I essentially argue that "dictatorships have been more effective promoters of economic growth than democracies." He then triumphantly points out that the research in this area is inconclusive and concludes, "It is worse than arrogant to tell people that they are better off under tyranny when in truth we do not have the faintest scholarly idea whether this is the case or not."

Here's what the book says on this topic from start to finish: "In general dictators have not done better at [economic] policies than democrats—far from it. Most dictators have ravaged their countries for personal gain. Scholars have asked whether democracy helps or hurts the economic growth of poor countries and despite many surveys, have come to no conclusive answer." (In a footnote here, I cite the same scholar whom Kagan quotes, Adam Przeworski.) I observe—accurately—that almost every recent case of sustained economic growth from Third World poverty to plenty has occurred in East Asia, under an autocratic regime, but then explicitly conclude, "The solution is not to scuttle democracy in the Third World. Democracy has immense benefits regardless of its effects on economic development and growth. It also has real economic virtues. Although it does not achieve the best results, it usually protects against the worst. You may not get a Lee Kuan Yew through elections, but you will not get a Mobutu Sese Seko either."

4. Kagan repeatedly claims that my call for "delegation" as a solution to some of the problems with democracies constitutes a recommendation for dictatorship.

In fact, I define delegation quite clearly—it takes up the bulk of my conclusion—as involving the creation of central banks, independent judicial and tax agencies, fast-track authority for annual budgets, and some less important procedures designed to make democratic government work better. "It is important to note that all these changes are utterly compatible with democracy," I write.

5. Kagan writes that I "insist" that illiberal democracies are "the greatest threat that the world faces today—greater even than the world's tyrannies." As additional evidence that I am soft on tyrannies, he adduces a recent column of mine in *Newsweek* magazine.

But nowhere in the book do I claim that illiberal democracies are in any way a threat to America's security or that of any other country. My book is not about international security threats but about economic and political development. The column that Kagan mentions, meanwhile, is on an entirely unrelated topic—the practice some conservatives have gotten into of taking real security threats and irresponsibly exaggerating them. I mention the Team-B report on the Soviet Union in the 1970s, the Cox Commission on China in the 1990s, and claims about Saddam Hussein's weapons in recent months. The column concludes, "What we discovered about the Soviet Union after the cold war was that it was every bit as evil as we had thought—indeed more so—but that it was a whole lot less powerful than we had feared. That is what we will probably discover about Saddam Hussein's Iraq."

And so it goes. Nearly every paragraph of Kagan's review contains some

continued on page 37

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Armies of Compassion?

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

Since Liberia hit America's front pages roughly two months ago, it has sparked a debate over compassion, not justice. The press often calls Liberia a "humanitarian crisis." It's a familiar phrase in reporting on Africa, and it encourages people to think apolitically. Famine and AIDS are described as "humanitarian crises." So are civil wars of indeterminate origin. "Humanitarian crises" provoke sympathy but also fatalism, since their causes seem vaguely beyond anyone's control. And, thus, the U.S. discussion over Liberia has been largely about charity rather than blame.

But Liberia is no more a "humanitarian crisis" than was Bosnia or Kosovo. As in the former Yugoslavia, a dictator came to power in the waning days of the cold war, and his thirst for wealth and power led him to sponsor vicious, ethnically based proxy wars throughout the region. In the Balkans, the U.S. media assumed that any ultimate solution to those wars would require justice for Slobodan Milosevic and his henchmen. To suggest that all the people of Sarajevo needed was food, shelter, and a cease-fire would have been considered insulting.

But, in Liberia, justice for Charles Taylor—who Richard Holbrooke aptly called the Milosevic of Africa—is an afterthought. Although the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has indicted Taylor for war crimes, the Bush administration has not called for him to be put on trial. Indeed, the United States is encouraging Taylor to go to Nigeria, despite its clear intention not to hand him over to the court. The U.S. media rarely suggests that Liberians, and other West Africans, may have trouble peacefully reconstructing their societies if the men responsible for mass rape, murder, and torture are living with impunity in their midst. Taylor has even suggested that his exile in Nigeria would be merely a "cooling-off period" before his return to politics.

Why do Americans view Bosnia as a political crisis requiring justice but Liberia as a humanitarian crisis requiring a cease-fire and the Red Cross? Partly, it's a matter of knowledge. It's hard for Americans to assign blame when most commentators, and even many government officials, are only vaguely aware of the facts. In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan famously called Liberia's leader, Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, "Chairman Moe." On "FoxNews" two weeks ago, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz misstated the name of the Economic Community of West African States, the organization sponsoring Liberia's Nigerian-led peacekeeping force.

But the problem is deeper than a lack of information. As I noted in this space four years ago (see "War Fair," May 31, 1999), Americans—and Westerners in general—don't naturally view African conflicts politically because, until the 1960s, the discipline of political science entirely ignored the continent. Under colonialism, the West viewed Africa primarily through the lens of anthropology. This was in part due to the British policy of "indirect rule"—the practice of leaving a colonized tribe's social structure intact so it could be governed by a relatively small number of colonial officials. In order to maintain tribal structures, Britain needed anthropologists to study them. And, given that the ultimate goal of this study was preservation, it tended to depict African societies as static. This, in turn, predisposed Westerners to see African conflict as a primordial state of affairs immune to remedy rather than as the product of political decisions by individual leaders. And, if a conflict is primordial, no one is truly to blame.

Such thinking colored the U.S. debate over the Balkans, too—where anti-interventionists often explained the violence of the 1990s as the product of ethnic hatreds that stretched back to the mists of time. But, on Bosnia, that rhetoric of moral equivalence competed with a different one, in which interventionists demanded to know how the world could permit another genocide in Europe and compared Milosevic to Hitler. The implication was that the peoples of the Balkans—as Europeans—were not culturally programmed for endless brutality and could change under better leadership, just as the Germans had.

That view is largely missing from the Liberia debate. And it not only lets Taylor off the hook, it lets the United States off as well. Liberia's current civil war doesn't have ancient roots. Indeed, the country was stable for most of its history. The seeds of the current crisis were laid in the '80s, during the dictatorship of Doe, who destroyed civil society and sowed ethnic hatred by blatantly favoring his own tribe. Rather than use its enormous leverage in Liberia to force Doe to relinquish power, the United States propped him up as an anti-communist client. After Doe blatantly rigged his 1985 reelection, then–Secretary of State George Schultz said Liberia was making "genuine progress" toward democracy. Between 1980 and 1987, according to Michael Clough's book *Free at Last?: U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the Cold War*, Liberia's annual GNP spiraled downward at an annual rate of 5.2 percent, despite substantial U.S. aid.

In late 1989, Taylor, gathering troops from ethnic groups Doe had oppressed, led an army to the suburbs of the capital, Monrovia. With Liberia's strategic importance diminished by the end of the cold war, the United States refused to intervene. To prevent Taylor—who had already developed a reputation for horrifying crimes—from taking power, Liberia's neighbors sent in peacekeeping troops. They stayed for roughly six years, with little U.S. support or guidance, brutalizing the population themselves. In 1997, the West Africans finally left, leaving Taylor free to win a sham election. He quickly exported horror throughout the region, backing rebel groups whose child-soldiers destabilized four of Liberia's neighbors. Finally, starting in 2000, those neighbors turned the tables, creating the Liberian proxies that are now on the verge of capturing power.

American commentators often talk of America's historic links to Liberia; but they rarely discuss America's culpability in its political descent. And this assumption of U.S. innocence undergirds the common view of Liberia as a charity case ravaged by the same vague forces that seem to ravage so much of Africa. But Liberia doesn't need charity. It needs justice for the man who destroyed it and responsibility from the historic patron that let it happen. There has been too much pity in the U.S. debate over Liberia and too little anger. **PETER BEINART**

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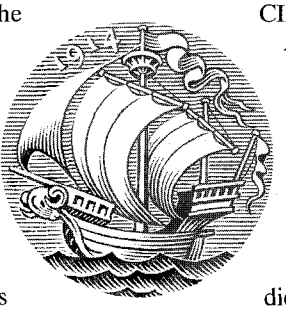
Offshore

ADD LIBERIA TO the list of cases in which George W. Bush's grandiose rhetoric of compassion gave way to a toothless policy of inaction. The president's tour of Africa last month helped focus U.S. attention on the plight of the small West African nation, where 14 years of civil war have led to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. After Bush returned, a Pentagon team was dispatched to the capital, Monrovia, and senior officials began whispering that thousands of American troops would soon be on their way to end the bloodshed. It gradually became clear, however, that those troops would merely be anchored offshore to provide "logistical support" to the West African peacekeepers who arrived this week.

Moreover, it appears that logistical support may be minimal. The U.S.-sponsored U.N. resolution that authorized the peacekeeping force, called ECOMIL, requires the United Nations, not the United States, to provide the resources needed to sustain it. The White House has promised only a paltry $10 million to the peacekeeping effort and has not offered American officers to help direct the forces. Pentagon officials are emphasizing that the six to ten Americans who landed in Monrovia Wednesday do not signal the beginning of a larger deployment. Worse, the White House has declined to demand that Charles Taylor, Liberia's brutal dictator, be brought before the U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has indicted him for war crimes. Instead, the administration has merely called for Taylor to slink off into exile in Nigeria. Indeed, in a perversely inverted ultimatum, the administration has said U.S. forces will not take a more active role until Taylor has left the country—a policy that grants him considerable incentive to stay.

The consequences of these half-measures could be awful. As Hudson Morgan writes (see "Bad Company," page 10), during the last West African intervention in Liberia, underpaid Nigerian peacekeepers, lacking leadership from a well-trained officer corps like the American military, looted Liberia blind and committed gross human rights abuses. And, absent Taylor's imprisonment, Liberia may never see a lasting peace. If he remains in Liberia, no cease-fire will hold. Even if he departs for exile, he has made clear his intention to return one day.

So far, in other words, Bush has bungled America's response to the Liberia crisis. But it's not too late for him to repair some of the damage. He could start by increasing U.S. funding for ECOMIL and sending U.S. troops to join the force, thereby reducing peacekeepers' opportunities to loot and rape in Liberia. The United States should also make clear that, if Taylor declines to leave the country, ECOMIL and U.S. forces will remove him forcibly and deliver him to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. Even if Taylor miraculously keeps his promise to go into exile, the administration should make clear that he must ultimately be tried before the Special Court.



State Department officials say they will worry about getting Taylor to the court once they get him out of Liberia, but at the moment they have no plan to accomplish either goal. The way to ensure that Taylor eventually faces justice is for Bush to press the United Nations to grant the Special Court Chapter VII authority, which would bind all nations—including Taylor's exile destination of Nigeria—to enforce its orders. The Bush administration has claimed that, despite its opposition to the International Criminal Court, it supports ad hoc tribunals such as the Special Court. Now is the moment to prove it.

Why should Americans care whether Liberia disintegrates? Many in the media have focused on our nineteenth-century link to Liberia, noting that freed American slaves founded the country in 1821. But our twentieth-century bonds are equally worth recalling. During World War I, though blissfully isolated from the conflict, Liberia declared war against Germany as a show of solidarity. During World War II, at America's request, Liberia declared war on the Axis powers and hosted a major U.S. military base. During the cold war, Liberia supported the United States, serving as the CIA's listening post for all of Africa. And, at America's urging, Liberia cast the deciding vote at the United Nations to create Israel. Yet America did not always treat Liberia well in return. The Reagan administration supported Liberian dictator Samuel Doe, an illiterate thug whose unpopular reign Taylor exploited by launching a bloody rebellion in 1989. Then, with the cold war over, the first Bush administration declined to intervene, abandoning our longtime ally and her neighbors to more than a decade of bloodshed and chaos. Today, George W. Bush has a historic opportunity to make amends for his father's mistake. So far he has not. ■

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NOTEBOOK

RICE GIVES US A NEW EXCUSE . . . WE GIVE YOU THE TNR PRIMARY

REVISIONISM WATCH

AFTER WEEKS OF ARGUING THAT IT doesn't matter whether Iraq actually sought uranium from Africa—as the president inaccurately claimed in his State of the Union address—the Bush administration has a new explanation for why the absence of evidence of an Iraqi nuclear program is irrelevant. Appearing last week on PBS's "NewsHour," national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said the Bush administration never claimed Saddam Hussein was close to having nuclear weapons: "It was a case that said he is trying to reconstitute. He's trying to acquire nuclear weapons. Nobody ever said that it was going to be the next year." Excuse us? George W. Bush told the United Nations on September 12, 2002, "Should Iraq acquire fissile material, it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year." And he repeated the claim many times. On the eve of Congress's vote to authorize war, Bush told a Cincinnati audience, "If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year." And, of course, Bush's uranium claim made it sound as though Saddam was trying to do just that.

Rice's revisionism is only part of a larger conservative counterattack. In an editorial this week, *The Wall Street Journal* argued the administration never claimed Iraq was an imminent threat, calling the charge "simply an invention after the fact, and a dangerous one." Yes, Bush may have never used the word "imminent," but he and his deputies repeatedly made the case that Iraq's nuclear weapons program could reach critical mass in a year. More generally, the president said on October 7, 2002, "Some ask how urgent this danger is to America and the world. The danger is already significant." And the administration's description of the impending war

Condoleezza Rice

as "preemptive"—the political science term for war against an immediate threat, rather than "preventive," which suggests an emerging one—implied a clear and present danger from Iraq. That was certainly the impression the American people got—two-thirds believed Iraq posed an "imminent threat," according to a *Newsweek* poll taken in September 2002. So did representatives, such as Mississippi Republican Chip Pickering, who explained his vote for war, saying, "Nuclear capability is around the corner, in the hands of a dictator." Do Rice and the *Journal* really want to try splitting the difference between "imminence" and "less than a year" or "around the corner"? Evidently, they do.

PIPE DOWN

GO TO THE WEBSITE OF THE COUNCIL on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and you will see an urgent call to "Act Now! Ask Senate to reject the Daniel Pipes Nomination." Elsewhere on the site, another "Action Alert" beckons you to ask the president "to rescind nomination of 'Islamophobe.'" President Bush has named Daniel Pipes, an eminent and scrupulous scholar of Arab politics and Islam—though one not fearful of argument—to the board of directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace, an appointment that requires Senate confirmation. CAIR, a collective fellow-traveler of, and apologist for, Muslim extremism, has made Pipes's defeat its current priority. And three U.S. senators on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (Ted Kennedy, Tom Harkin, and Chris Dodd)—alas, all Democrats—have already signed on to its campaign (with Senator Jim Jeffords apparently leaning their way, too). The senators' public grievance is that Pipes is "provocative" and "controversial." How can any authority on the Middle East and Islamic extremism be anything else, if he is saying anything serious? And it is precisely challenging and stimulating thinking on these matters that the nation requires from its centers of learning, of which the U.S. Institute of Peace is a promising example. It is just possible, of course, that, despite the national need for bracing scholarship on the Arab and Muslim worlds, what Senator Kennedy wants the institute and its overseers to deal in is pabulum, the calming clichés that left us wholly unprepared for September 11, 2001. It is exactly Pipes's aversion to pabulum that has persuaded a wide-ranging roster of notable area specialists and independent intellectuals to publicly endorse his nomination, a roster that includes Fouad Ajami, Paul Kennedy, James Q. Wilson, John Keegan, and Raymond Tanter. For committee Democrats to defeat Pipes would not be politically wise; after all, handing a victory to the Muslim hate front is not exactly what voters want. Worse, it would signal that the Democrats are ready to silence a truthful voice of honest scholarship about the Middle East.

DAVID COWLES

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LOWER YOUR EYES

CAREFUL OBSERVERS OF THIS PAGE will notice there is something missing from it—namely the "Inside the Box" feature that had graced Notebook since September 2002. That comic take on the political news of the week was penned by Bruce Reed, who, in addition to being a very funny man, moonlights as president of the Democratic Leadership Council. We offer him our heartfelt thanks for twelve months of topical hilarity.

Even not-at-all-careful observers of this page will notice that its lower half is now taken up by something called the "TNR Primary." Begun as a feature on THE NEW REPUBLIC website in May, the TNR Primary follows the six major Democratic candidates for president (Howard Dean, John Edwards, Richard Gephardt, Bob Graham, John Kerry, and Joe Lieberman) and grades their daily statements and actions in a handful of topic areas (domestic policy, foreign policy, political courage, intellectual honesty, and general likability). Due to the feature's success—by our own estimation, its influence in determining the eventual Democratic nominee will rank somewhere between the endorsement of the American Federation of Musicians and the outcome of the June 8 Montana primary—we have decided to print weekly excerpts in the magazine proper. Those whose appetites for political commentary are whetted by these excerpts are encouraged to visit *www.tnr.com/primary* for more.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

GREGG EASTERBROOK'S ARTICLE LAST week ("States' Rites," August 11) reported that financier Felix Rohatyn has proposed Congress ease the states' budget woes by providing them a bonus of up to $75 per year. As our more charitable readers may have surmised, he actually suggested a much larger amount: $75 billion. ■

QUIT WHILE YOU'RE BEHIND

Candidate: Howard Dean
Category: General Likability
Grade: D

Supporters of Howard Dean don't just argue that he would make a strong Democratic nominee; they argue that, even if he doesn't win, he will exert a positive force by energizing new groups of voters. The trouble with that argument is that Dean's criticisms are directed as much at his own party as at President Bush. Thus, if Dean doesn't win, it seems likely that his supporters will demand that the eventual nominee take purist positions—say, on foreign policy—far to the left of the American electorate.

Now it looks like Dean himself plans to lead the mau-mauing. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe privately asked each candidate to agree to drop out of the race and endorse the nominee when the primary winner was "mathematically clear." *U.S. News* quoted Dean's refusal: "I'm not deliberately going to sit it out [in order to] have an uncontentious convention. [T]his is about building the party."

Most people's idea of party-building includes a harmonious convention where all the party factions unify behind the nominee before the election. Dean's notion

seems to be just the opposite. So, at the moment when the Democratic nominee (if not Dean) is trying to reach out to the center, Dean will be hammering him for failing to match Dean's own passion for political suicide. —Jonathan Chait

THE EDWARDS MANDATE

Candidate: John Edwards
Category: Domestic Policy
Grade: B

Last week, John Edwards introduced his plan to expand health insurance coverage, particularly among children, through a system of tax incentives and expanded government programs. On the surface, it may not look new: Howard Dean and John Kerry have both proposed the same basic health insurance formula. But Edwards's plan contains an important wrinkle: He'd make insurance for children mandatory. Parents would be legally responsible for providing their children with insurance or obtaining government insurance if private coverage was unaffordable. To enforce the mandate—and extend coverage to kids who fall through the cracks—hospitals, clinics, and schools would check for insurance in the same way they now check for routine childhood vaccinations.

Taking this step—policy wonks call it an "individual mandate"—is important because, done properly, it would mean Edwards gets closer to truly "universal" coverage for children than both Dean and Kerry, at least at the outset. (Dick Gephardt's plan, which relies on a mandate for employers rather than individuals, would probably extend coverage to slightly fewer kids than the Kerry and Dean plans.) It's also classic Clintonian politics, because it emphasizes the responsibilities citizens bear in return for their rights to government-guaranteed benefits.

The downside to the Edwards plan is what it doesn't do enough: cover adults. Edwards's plan comes in at $59 billion per year, less than what Kerry, Dean, or Gephardt have proposed. (Kerry and Dean would spend about $90 billion per year; Gephardt would spend more than $250 billion per year.) As a result, Edwards covers ten million fewer people. That's a definite weakness. But, given the plan's strengths, it's not one worth dwelling on for too long.

—Jonathan Cohn

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

Candidate: Bob Graham
Category: Political Courage
Grade: D

When Bob Graham first raised the specter of impeaching George W. Bush over Uraniumgate last month, he sounded bold—if a bit hyperbolic. A few weeks later, however, Graham is starting to sound less courageous than cute. On "Fox News Sunday" last week, he noted that, "[under] the standards that were used to impeach Bill Clinton," Bush deserved the same. But pressed on whether he personally felt impeachment was justified, he changed the subject. "The fact is, this is a very academic discussion," he said. "Tom DeLay and the other leadership of the House of Representatives are not going to impeach George W. Bush."

But it was Graham who brought up impeachment in the first place. For him to then dismiss questions about it as "academic" —and thereby avoid taking a clear position on the substance of the matter—seems more than a little wishy-washy. He can't have his yellowcake and eat it, too.

—Michael Crowley

For primary items updated daily and complete candidate rankings, visit *www.tnr.com/primary*.

CARICATURES BY ZACH TRENHOLM

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Peacekeeping, Nigerian-style.

Bad Company

BY HUDSON MORGAN

On July 31, children emptied into the streets of the Liberian capital, Monrovia, for the first time in weeks as an initial team of West African peacekeepers drove through the city. Perhaps not uncoincidentally, the rebels who had been shelling the city held their fire. Four days later, a contingent of 200 Nigerian peacekeepers—the first of 1,500 to be dispatched by Nigeria under the banner of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—arrived to supervise a cease-fire in Liberia's brutal civil war, facilitate the departure of Liberian leader Charles Taylor, and pave the way for a return to democracy. The Bush administration cheered the Nigerians' efforts to stanch the bloodletting.

But Peter Bonner Jallah was probably less pleased. In 1992, Jallah, a Liberian, was arrested by a Nigerian-led peacekeeping force sent to Liberia under a strikingly similar U.N. charter. According to a 1995 U.S. State Department report, the Nigerian peacekeepers detained Jallah for 19 months, during which they beat him in the head with the butt of a gun, administered electrical shocks to his body, used gasoline to burn his genitals, and handcuffed him so tightly that he suffered permanent nerve damage. And Jallah's torture was hardly an isolated incident: During the Nigerian-led interventions in Liberia in the early '90s and Sierra Leone in the late '90s, peacekeepers looted with impunity, trafficked in diamonds, sold arms to rebel militias, and committed wholesale human rights abuses. And, since the United States has not agreed to commit troops to lead the current peacekeeping force in Liberia, there is little evidence that the West African soldiers will conduct themselves differently this time around.

The Nigerians entered Liberia for the first time after Charles Taylor, then a rebel leader, invaded the country from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire in December 1989. By summer 1990, Taylor's forces had reached the suburbs of Monrovia, where they killed civilians at will and wreaked bloody havoc. Fearing the war would destabilize the region, the United States stationed troops off the Liberian coast but would not intervene. So, in August 1990, a group of West African peacekeepers, more than half of whom were Nigerian, landed in Monrovia. Then, as now, their goal was to enforce a cease-fire on the ground and oversee democratic elections.

It didn't happen. Nigerian military wages had reached their nadir in the early '90s, and the soldiers quickly turned peacekeeping into a lucrative enterprise by looting Liberia's wealth. According to press reports at the time, Nigerian officers stole hospital equipment, motorcycles, and underground cables and even stripped electrical grids for shipment back to Nigeria for sale. At a refinery in a zone under the peacekeepers' control, a Nigerian unit reportedly plundered an estimated $50 million worth of iron ore. As one Western diplomat told *The New York Times* in 1997, "By the time the Nigerians really got serious about bringing this war to an end, ... they had taken just about everything that there was to take from Liberia." To make even more money, some Nigerian soldiers sold arms they had captured back to the rebel militias, thereby prolonging the conflict. Worst of all, some Nigerian-led troops apparently prevented the delivery of food to famine-stricken Liberians in order to skim profits off of aid deliveries. In a 1993 statement, eight relief agencies noted that, as 80 percent of Liberia starved, the peacekeepers were "hindering humanitarian action."

The underpaid Nigerian forces proved just as venal in Sierra Leone. There, another warlord, Foday Sankoh, was terrorizing his way to power, and the United States, traumatized by its Somalia experience, was happy to let West Africans handle the situation. West African forces intervened, and by 1997 more than 10,000 Nigerian troops were deployed in and around Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. Once again, however, the Nigerians proved more adept at looting the country than securing it. As in Liberia, peacekeepers sold munitions and drugs to rival factions and mined diamonds alongside them. As Jack Jolis, president of the Rough Diamond Consultancy, a diamond dealer, told a House subcommittee focused on Africa in 2000, "Peacekeepers? They consisted mostly of Nigerian gangsters assisted by some Guinean gangsters ... killing anyone who gets in their way of putting their hands on the diamonds."

The Nigerians not only lined their pockets at Liberia's and Sierra Leone's expenses but also developed an antipathy toward portions of the civilian population. Some Nigerian troops had ethnic ties to the various rebel groups and used their positions as peacekeepers to terrorize civilians opposed to the militias they supported. Other Nigerian soldiers were simply trained in a military culture that placed little value on human life. Whatever the reasons, a 1990 Human Rights Watch report blasted the Nigerian-led force in Liberia for "its bombing of heavily populated civilian areas [and] abuses by its soldiers including ... harassment of civilians and attacks against women." In Sierra Leone, meanwhile, Nigerian-led forces bombed civilian targets, shot at human shields, and in January 1999 summarily executed more than 50 wounded patients in a Freetown hospital. As detailed in a 1999 Human Rights Watch report, "Wounded rebels were dragged from their beds and executed within the hospital grounds, or shot directly in their beds or as they tried to flee on crutches and in wheelchairs." Little wonder, then, that some Liberians are not exactly looking forward to the Nigerians' return. One Liber-

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ian recalled to *The Washington Post* this week Nigerian soldiers whipping Liberians with electrical wire.

Given their performance, it is not surprising that the Nigerian-led interventions were not wholly successful. Though they succeeded in establishing short-term peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the warfare in both countries never fully ceased. In fact, Taylor was able to use the continuing fighting in Liberia to amass greater power and destabilize the region further by inciting rebellions in neighboring states.

HISTORY MAY SOON repeat itself. One of the Nigerian battalions that landed in Monrovia served in Sierra Leone. They, and the other Nigerian troops who will follow, are not paid much better than they were in the '90s and therefore have just as much economic incentive to loot. And the Nigerians have rejected any formal efforts to investigate, and possibly learn from, their crimes. In mid-July, Human Rights Watch made seven formal recommendations for peacekeepers entering Liberia, including a request to deploy advisers knowledgeable about humanitarian law alongside peacekeeping forces. Janet Fleischman, Washington director for Africa at Human Rights Watch, says there has been no indication that West African peacekeepers will respond to this request. What's more, although ECOWAS pledged an investigation into peacekeepers' atrocities in Sierra Leone, no such audit has been conducted.

The Bush administration is doing little to prevent the Nigerians from repeating their bad behavior. It has allotted only $10 million in military aid to ECOWAS for the new Liberian peacekeeping efforts, not enough money to seriously boost the Nigerian troops' pay. It has not pushed ECOWAS forces to include human rights advisers with their contingents or to conduct an assessment of past behavior. Worst of all, despite deploying three Marine ships off the coast of Liberia, the administration has refused to allow any American officers to take joint leadership of the peacekeeping mission, a move that would make it far less likely that Nigerian officers raised in a ruthless military culture would be able to torture, murder, and steal from civilians. The Bush administration seems to think that, in Liberia, West African troops will act decently and effectively without the United States taking the lead. Perhaps they should ask Peter Bonner Jallah. ■

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Tashkent Dispatch

Steppe Back

BY ROBERT TEMPLER

"IF YOU DOUBT our achievements, look at our buildings." This is the slogan of the moment in Uzbekistan, painted in letters three feet high on banners in the capital, Tashkent. Uzbekistan's president, Islam Karimov, likes to think of himself as a latter-day Tamerlane, the conquering Central Asian emperor of the fourteenth century who uttered the phrase to boast of his extraordinary azure-tiled mosques. But the vast new ministries of the Uzbek capital, all mirrored glass and cheap moldings, hardly recall the grandeur of Central Asia's past. Instead, Tashkent's joyless boulevards, high fences, and bombastic palaces feel like Baghdad in better days.

It's not just the pompous architecture that evokes Iraq. Uzbekistan under Karimov is becoming an increasingly repressive and impoverished place, with a horrible human rights record. Economic power has been grabbed by a tiny corrupt elite who have enriched themselves on the back of an exploitative cotton industry. At least 6,000 people are in prison for their religious beliefs. Men who venture outside their homes wearing skullcaps and beards are arrested for being "wahhabis," the local term for anyone who spends too much time at the mosque. The police extract confessions through torture, and compliant judges sentence dissidents to lengthy terms in Jaslyk, a notorious prison camp where last year two religious detainees were boiled to death. An accident with a kettle, the government says. An example of systematic abuse of prisoners, says the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture.

Once, American conservatives allied themselves with Islamic extremists in Central Asia to fight Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union. Now, they are eagerly developing a friendship with a ruler little different than Brezhnev to fight Islamic extremists. In exchange for U.S. use of an isolated air base in southern Uzbekistan, Karimov has received hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance and a free ride on human rights and economic reform. Uzbekistan has agreed to make some minor political and economic adjustments, yet the past year has seen the Karimov government's repression and economic mismanagement worsen. The response from Washington has been silence and more money. This is money badly spent: U.S. support for Karimov will backfire, hurting U.S. interests in the region.

Conservatives have begun touting Karimov. As Stephen Schwartz wrote in a recent issue of *The Weekly Standard*,

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the United States "must support the Uzbeks in their internal as well as their external combat, and must repudiate the blandishments of the human rights industry."

But, far from helping in the fight against terrorism, this support is likely to spawn new extremists. Alan Kreuger, a Princeton economics professor, and Jitka Maleckova, a Middle East expert at Charles University in Prague, have found that, while it is difficult to demonstrate links between terrorism and poverty or education, there is a close correlation between countries producing terrorists and having a poor record of political rights and civil liberties. Freedom House ranked Uzbekistan just a little above Saddam Hussein's Iraq. This year, the Heritage Foundation and *The Wall Street Journal* put it one hundred forty-ninth on their joint rankings of economic freedom in 156 countries—worse than Burma. Indeed, Uzbekistan's mix of political and economic repression; underground Islamic movements; and a youthful, disillusioned, and unemployed population could prove fertile ground for terrorist recruiters.

There are some legitimate security concerns in Uzbekistan, but Karimov has blown them out of proportion to justify his hard-line rule. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a militant group the White House labeled as terrorist even before September 11, 2001, was decimated fighting alongside the Taliban in fall 2001. An underground group of Islamists known as Hizb-ut-Tahrir have never advocated violence in their call for a Central Asian Islamic caliphate.

These groups have relatively little backing right now, but their popular support is growing—mostly because of Karimov. The concentration of wealth and power in an ever-smaller number of hands close to the president, combined with increasing repression and a weakening economy, is fueling widespread discontent that could turn violent. Visiting officials who lecture Karimov on his economic failures are firmly reminded that his education was in the dismal science. Indeed, during Soviet times, he worked at the Uzbek branch of Gosplan, the central planning agency, where he shuffled goods from one unproductive factory to another while skimming a cut. That's still how he sees economic management. Last year, he effectively closed down Uzbekistan's bazaars, the wholesale markets that are the center of commerce, in an attempt, many believe, to enrich members of the government trying to control wholesale trade. He has had the government buy back, at their original price, businesses that were privatized years ago. Many businesses that are then taken over by families of politicians.

But economic mismanagement is only part of a pattern of ultimately self-destructive behavior by Karimov. He has fomented a rebellion in Tajikistan, armed Abdulrashid Dostum—a particularly vicious warlord in Afghanistan—and even bombed villages in Kyrgyzstan, a country he feels has been too lax in tackling Islamic groups. He has mined the once permeable borders of his country so that farmers visiting their cousins in neighboring countries across the hills have had their feet blown off. He has virtually closed Uzbekistan's borders to trade. Meanwhile, the corrupt and powerful benefit from their complete control over the few flourishing areas of the economy, such as cotton production.

All this has helped the radicals. For most people in Uzbekistan, particularly farmers, there is the same drudgery and abusive state control that existed under the Soviet Union but none of the educational or economic opportunities, medical care, or Black Sea vacations. During Soviet times, Uzbekistan was a well-developed industrial center, because Stalin placed heavy industry far from any frontier that could be overrun during a war. All that has gone, the victim of failed economic policies. Former mining towns, such as Angren at the edge of the Ferghana Valley, appear almost completely dead. There is no visible economy, no shops, no market stalls. Enterprising men go to Russia to work. Unfortunate young women get lured into jobs "waitressing" in Dubai.

As a result, across the country there is an increasing sense of economic failure, political paralysis, and popular discontent. It is now easy to find men in Tashkent who, though fond of their vodka and pork sausages, are drawn to the IMU, which had been a feeble movement, because the IMU is one of the only groups that has ever stood up to the government. Underground mosques are gaining in popularity, since they, like the IMU, are one of the only avenues open to people who wish to express their discontent over Karimov's corruption and mismanagement.

It might make more sense for the United States to tolerate Karimov's misrule if Uzbekistan were delivering important assets. But the long-term risks of uncritical support for Karimov, who has nothing in common with the United States other than a shared fear of Islamic extremism, do not outweigh the limited strategic benefits of a base in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek base is of little help to the Pentagon in the war on terrorism, since it already has bases in Afghanistan from which it can battle Al Qaeda offshoots, as well as in Kyrgyzstan for operations in other parts of Central Asia.

KARIMOV, HOWEVER, IS prospering on the back of his new relationship with the United States. He can now ignore diplomats who, several years ago, used to raise concerns about human rights abuses and lack of economic reform. In 2002, the State Department issued a limp statement criticizing a fraudulent referendum Karimov held to extend his term in office. Two days after the statement was released, a senior American official announced a tripling of aid for Uzbekistan. Like Hosni Mubarak and other despots who regard themselves as indispensable to Washington, Karimov only has to make the occasional concession to the United States: A few prisoners may be released ahead of a presidential visit to Washington or a new nongovernmental organization may be allowed to register just as a U.S. aid package is under consideration.

The sort of real changes that are needed—changes that might bring democracy and economic opportunity to Uzbeks—will never occur as long as Karimov is running the country. And so a population that aspires to all things that the United States offers is starting to become sullen and re-

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sentful at the unquestioning support Washington gives their dictator. Moderate Muslims who want to worship in peace are finding all forms of religious expression and political opposition closed off to them except the underground mosques. Middle-class families are being squeezed out of their businesses by a rapaciously corrupt elite. Young men with no prospects are turning bitter and disillusioned. We know how this story ends. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

Third Way

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

IN THE KNESSET office of Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, justice minister and head of the ultra-secular Shinui Party, there is a painting based on a famous photograph of Theodor Herzl gazing into the distance. In the painting, Herzl sees a whimsical Israeli landscape—part Levantine, part Western—of cacti, camels, and sleek cars. Herzl, a Eurocentric secularist who advocated a Zionism of refuge, is an apt icon for Lapid, a Holocaust survivor who sees the decline in Israel's Westernization—the result of a rising ultra-Orthodox population—as a threat to Israel's edge over the Arab world.

Herzl, Zionism's ultimate consensus figure, is an appropriate image for another reason. In recent months, the anti-ultra-Orthodox, Ashkenazi-dominated Shinui, the country's third-largest party after Likud and Labor, has come to embody mainstream Israel. While the Likud wavers over Ariel Sharon's concessions and the farther right, pro-settler National Religious Party and National Union oppose negotiations altogether, Shinui is the only party within Sharon's governing coalition that unequivocally supports the prime minister's dual policy of toughness on security and flexibility on territory. And, aside from Sharon himself, Lapid is arguably the politician who now most closely reflects the instincts of average Israelis. He was right-wing in the 1980s—he suggested placing car bombs in Palestinian cities to retaliate for terrorist attacks—and became a supporter of the Oslo process in the 1990s. And now he's a combination of the two: ready for a deal but not quite sure it's attainable, no matter what Israel concedes. He supports a Palestinian state but not the redivision of Jerusalem, advocating instead Palestinian autonomy in parts of the city under Israeli rule. Asked whether a final settlement is possible without dividing Jerusalem, he replies, "I don't believe in a solution with a capital S. Instead, there are a hundred solutions. [Other] peoples have lived together and occasionally massacred each other, but in between there are long periods of stability. A conflict like ours can last generations."

Positioning Shinui as the party of the Israeli center is crucial to Lapid's goal of transforming it into the Knesset's second-largest faction, displacing Labor, which currently has 19 seats to Shinui's 15. When Lapid took over Shinui—then a tiny, failing party—in the late '90s, he transformed it into a controversial one-issue protest movement against ultra-Orthodox privileges, such as wholesale draft deferments. Lapid correctly identified the combination of ultra-Orthodox demographic growth and ultra-Orthodox political power as a long-term threat to democratic, Westernized, secular Israel. And, in government, Lapid's party is using its power to ensure that ultra-Orthodox parties are denied access to patronage and budgets, strategies that may force the ultra-Orthodox closer to the Israeli mainstream. As the ultra-Orthodox community receives less help from the state, it may rethink its insistence on confining its young men to the yeshiva, rather than letting them join the workforce and the military. Ultimately, Lapid is convinced that, as the peace process intensifies, the farther right parties in Sharon's coalition will quit and be replaced by Labor and that the "secular revolution" Shinui has promised its supporters, including the introduction of civil marriage and divorce, will finally occur.

But, even as he pursues his secularist goals, Lapid has broadened Shinui's appeal as the party of the liberal, Ashkenazi middle class. Beyond opposing ultra-Orthodox power, Shinui has expanded its agenda to fight for middle-class economic causes, such as preventing tuition increases for university students. At the same time, Lapid has openly backed the liberal social causes supported by many middle-class Israelis. "I'm for free trade, free press, free love," says Lapid, who was the only government minister to appear at Tel Aviv's recent gay pride parade.

It's a strategy that seems to be working. Shinui more than doubled its seats in the Knesset in the January elections, and, today, with Labor leaderless, it draws more and more liberal Israelis. One recent Likud-commissioned poll showed that Shinui would win more seats than Labor if elections were held today.

LAPID'S ANTIPATHY TO religion and his passionate patriotism come from the same source: his experience as a child survivor. At age twelve, he saw Gestapo agents take away his father, a leader of the local Yugoslavian Jewish community. "I lost my God [then]," he has said. Later, he and his mother were rounded up with other Jews and marched toward a river to be shot. A Russian plane appeared, and everyone scattered. Mother and son hid in a public bathroom; when they emerged, the death march had moved on. "At that moment, I became a Zionist, because I understood that there had to be at least one place for a Jewish child."

Before becoming one of Israel's most controversial politicians, Lapid was one of its most controversial journalists. He was famous for outrageous one-liners, such as accusing Yitzhak Rabin's daughter of building her political

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career on family grief, and he retains an ironic, sharp wit. In explaining Shinui's difficulty in defining an independent line between what he sees as the increasingly similar positions of Likud and Labor, he says, "Between the ample stomach of Sharon and the ample stomach of Fuad [leading Labor Party member Binyamin "Fuad" Ben-Eliezer], there isn't much room for my ample stomach."

Since becoming justice minister, Lapid has toned down his provocative statements and assumed the dignity of his new position. In fact, Shinui's pivotal position in the peace process has given him the chance to become the pragmatist statesman. As justice minister, Lapid plays a key role in negotiating prisoner releases, the most sensitive short-term issue of the peace process. Failure to free prisoners will discredit the peace process among Palestinians, while releasing terrorists will discredit it among Israelis. Lapid the Pragmatist wants to help Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas by releasing more prisoners. And he is even ready, in principle, to consider releasing Marwan Barghouti, the Fatah leader who is accused of organizing atrocities, such as a machine-gun attack at a bat mitzvah celebration, but who helped broker the cease-fire from his Israeli jail. But Lapid the Survivor is wary of repeating Oslo's gullibility and says, "The greatest danger is to be misled by wishful thinking." Bridging his two personas, Lapid convinced the Cabinet to tie prisoner releases to Palestinians' compliance with their anti-terror commitments, a stipulation that keeps Sharon's coalition from losing face with Israelis.

But, for all of Lapid's success, the possibility of Shinui replacing Labor as the second major party also could be wishful thinking. Despite the Likud poll showing Shinui's popularity, the party's fortunes may be at their high point today, since it has no younger leaders with the charisma or political savvy to match the 72-year-old Lapid. One political reporter I spoke with couldn't even remember most of the names of Shinui's Knesset members.

But Shinui's greatest obstacle to becoming a party capable of challenging the Likud for power is its dogmatic secularism, which alienates many centrists who believe religion should play some role in Israeli life. Shinui insists on undoing the ban on Sabbath commerce, a change that many fear might polarize the country by destroying the Sabbath as a defining part of the Israeli experience. Shinui Interior Minister Avraham Poraz has even tried to tamper with the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to any Jew moving to Israel and is one of the last points of consensus left among Israeli Jews. (Poraz, however, wants to grant citizenship to non-Jews who invest in Israel.) And, when it comes to religion, Lapid himself is still capable of alienating significant portions of the mainstream. After Shinui eased the ban on the sale of bread last Passover, Lapid gloated in an interview, "This Passover, bread was the symbol of our freedom." In the long run, unless Lapid can convince Israelis that he's opposed to the abuse of religion, rather than religion itself, his gloating may be premature. ■

The real threat to *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Fetal Position

BY SACHA ZIMMERMAN

BACK IN JANUARY, the abortion rights group NARAL Pro-Choice America held a dinner in Washington to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the *Roe* v. *Wade* Supreme Court decision. But the event was far from celebratory, with speaker after speaker warning that a woman's right to choose was in grave danger. "For the first time since *Roe* v. *Wade*, anti-choice politicians control the presidency and both houses of Congress," NARAL Pro-Choice America President Kate Michelman warned in a typical speech. "The Supreme Court is one vote away from dismantling the right to choose." At a rally the next day, the group's legal director, Elizabeth Cavendish, declared, "A woman's right to choose is imperiled."

But, however serious the political threat to *Roe*, Michelman and Cavendish are missing a *technological* threat that could be greater still: ectogenesis. Better known as the artificial womb, ectogenesis is the process by which a fetus gestates in an environment external to the mother. And, while it may sound like the stuff of science fiction—evoking images of the "decanted infants" in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*—researchers estimate that ectogenesis could be a reality within five years.

If and when that happens, the legal and philosophical premises underpinning *Roe* could be completely dismantled. Which is why some pro-lifers are eagerly awaiting that day. And why it is so surprising that pro-choice activists appear to have given little or no thought to the brave new world that could be right around the corner.

ECTOGENESIS IS CLOSE to becoming a reality because scientists are steadily advancing reproductive technology at both ends of gestation. At one end, to help women who are having difficulty conceiving or who have defective wombs, Cornell University's Dr. Hung-Ching Liu has taken steps toward developing an artificial womb by removing cells from the lining of a woman's womb and then, using hormones, growing layers of these cells on a model of a uterus. The model eventually dissolves, leaving a new, artificial womb that continues to thrive. What's more, Liu's team found that, within days of being placed in the new womb, embryos will attach themselves to its walls and begin to grow. At that point, scientists must end the experiment to comply with in-vitro fertilization (IVF) laws, so researchers do not yet know how long after the beginning stages of gestation this artificial womb would be viable. But Liu has said she hopes to "create

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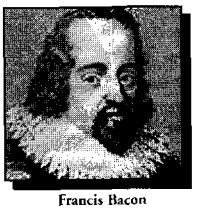
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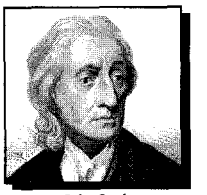
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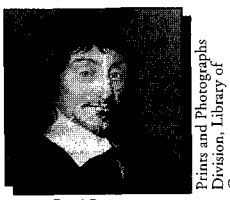
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complete artificial wombs using these techniques in a few years"—although, given current IVF and stem-cell laws, it is not yet clear whether she will be able to continue her work in the United States.

Meanwhile, at the other end of gestation, Temple University's Dr. Thomas Schaffer is trying to save premature babies by using a synthetic amniotic fluid. He developed a breathable liquid made of perfluorocarbons—liquids that carry more oxygen than air—and has successfully tested the fluid on premature lamb fetuses not yet capable of breathing air. Schaffer says that the only reason he isn't using the technique on human beings right now is a lack of funding. "We have babies that are six hundred grams [21.9 ounces], born on a toilet, brought to a NICU [neonatal intensive care unit], and survive," he says. "Now [with perfluorocarbons] we can take care of these children."

In Japan, Dr. Yoshinori Kuwabara, a professor of obstetrics at Juntendo University, has actually created an artificial womb, using an acrylic tank filled with a fluid similar to Schaffer's amniotic fluid and attached to a machine that acts as a placenta to bring oxygen and nutrients to the fetus. Kuwabara has successfully delivered goats from this artificial womb after just three weeks of gestation—the equivalent of one human trimester. Kuwabara says that, with enough funding, his ectogenetic chamber could be ready to use on a human fetus within five years.

While these scientists have no political agenda, the same can't be said for one of the earliest advocates of ectogenesis, Dr. William Cooper. In 1993, Cooper, then head of the Christian Fertility Institute, patented a "placental chamber," in which the fetus would gestate at the bottom of a tank and the placenta would rest on a shelf at the top. Cooper's invention went nowhere—today's advances toward ectogenesis owe nothing to the "placental chamber"—but his motivations for devising it are instructive: He hoped it would undermine *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Roe v. *Wade*, after all, is predicated on two basic ideas: a woman's right to privacy (including the right not to be pregnant) and the viability of the fetus—defined as the ability to survive outside the mother's womb, currently placed at 24 weeks of gestation. Complete ectogenesis could dismantle both of these premises. First, it could make *Roe*'s viability issue moot, since with ectogenesis a fetus could be technically viable outside the mother's womb from the moment of conception.

Which would surely impact the other idea underpinning *Roe*: a woman's right to privacy. With ectogenesis, an unwanted fetus, rather than being aborted, could be removed from a woman and placed in an ectogenetic chamber to be adopted later; the woman's right to privacy would arguably not be invaded, since removal of the fetus for implantation in an artificial womb need not be any more invasive than the abortion she was originally seeking. As bioethicists Peter Singer and Deane Wells write of ectogenesis in their book *Making Babies: The New Science and Ethics of Conception*, "Freedom to choose what is to happen to one's body is one thing; freedom to insist on the death of a being that is capable of living outside of one's body is another."

Although many right-to-lifers are skeptical of reproductive technology in general and view ectogenesis as an unnatural and dehumanizing possibility, others recognize that it could radically alter the abortion debate. "*Roe* v. *Wade* should be repealed anyway," says Dr. W. David Hager, an obstetrician-gynecologist and professor at the University of Kentucky School of Medicine who currently serves as head of the Bush administration's Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee. "But, if we had the technology to be able to placentize or incubate in a placental environment, then I would say that would be an argument in favor of repeal."

Other pro-life activists believe ectogenesis could change public attitudes about abortion in much the way *The Silent Scream*—the film, taken with a sonogram, that graphically documents the abortion process from extraction to destruction—did after its 1984 release. In his book, *The Hand of God*, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, the former abortion doctor turned pro-life activist who filmed *The Silent Scream*, writes of the "enormous threat to abortion forces" that the film precipitated due to its powerful imagery. Nathanson hopes that an acrylic ectogenetic chamber, containing a month-old fetus, could act as a similar visual aid. "If [the fetus is] viable from ten weeks on," he says, "you've destroyed *Roe* v. *Wade*. It collapses."

BUT, WHILE SOME pro-lifers have begun grappling with this possibility, not one of the five major pro-choice organizations I contacted—Planned Parenthood, the Center for Reproductive Rights, the National Organization for Women, NARAL Pro-Choice America, and the Feminist Majority Foundation—has a position on ectogenesis. "For NARAL it's really important not to get distracted," legal director Cavendish told me. "We have to keep an eye on the prize of electing officials devoted to keeping *Roe* v. *Wade*. We can't pay too much attention to every potential tactic pro-life may use to distract us from our goal—which remains the same, notwithstanding new technological developments."

Yet, while the pro-choice mainstream remains silent on ectogenesis, more radical voices have filled the vacuum. Writing about ectogenesis in her book *Human Reproduction: Principles, Practices, Policies*, feminist philosopher Christine Overall argues that abortion is about the right not to procreate, not simply the right not to be pregnant. Overall claims that fetal *extinction*—not just *extraction*—is the aim of women seeking abortions and that forcing a woman to submit to a fetal extraction is like forcing her to donate organs against her will. The pregnant woman, Overall writes, is the "most appropriate person—perhaps the only one—to decide the disposition of the fetus." Extraction, extinction, disposition: Is this how the pro-choice movement wants their side of the debate to be framed in a post-ectogenesis world?

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Surely there are more sophisticated arguments to be made for abortion rights in the face of ectogenesis: women who might raise their children in poverty rather than use an ectogenesis-adoption solution and face the emotional turmoil of knowing that someone else is raising their child; pregnancies resulting from rape that might be better terminated than saved; changes that could occur in the scope of fathers' rights vis à vis mothers. But you won't hear these arguments from mainstream pro-choice groups. Nor will you hear the alternative: that ectogenesis could lead to an agreement with the pro-life side that transcends the abortion debate altogether.

For now, the pro-choice movement is ignoring the prospect of ectogenesis at its own peril. If and when ectogenesis becomes a reality, it will redefine the abortion debate. Just consider the issue of viability: 41 states ban abortion after viability; if ectogenesis is achieved, will abortion then become illegal in each of those states? Many pro-lifers will certainly be prepared to argue yes. Isn't it about time pro-choicers start thinking of what they will say in response? ■

Are foreign rebel leaders duping the American right, again?

Founding Fakers

BY FRANKLIN FOER

On April 6, a C-17 transport plane unloaded Ahmed Chalabi in Nasiriya, the Iraqi heartland. For years, Washington conservatives had fantasized about this moment. They hadn't just touted the exiled leader of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) as a potential player in postwar Iraq but as a world historic figure. In meetings, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense William Luti described him as the "George Washington of Iraq." Others suggested he could become a George Washington for the entire Muslim world. Writing in *National Review* about "the president-in-waiting," David Pryce-Jones argued, "[I]f anything like the expectations of Chalabi's program are fulfilled, Arab absolutism can be broken." In *The Wall Street Journal*, Seth Lipsky pronounced him "a democratic visionary."

His American boosters assumed the Nasiriya stop would be the first event in a chain culminating in a Chalabi presidency. This assumption even permeated Pentagon planning. According to a Knight Ridder report last July, top planners such as Luti and his boss, Doug Feith, believed "Chalabi, who boasted of having a secret network inside and outside the regime, and his supporters would replace Saddam and impose order."

For the most part, these supporters didn't materialize. In fact, they have been so hard to come by that Chalabi has largely stopped trying to get them. Reporters in Baghdad told me that Chalabi no longer bothers holding rallies or advertising for the INC. "He has no chance of obtaining" the people's affection, one says. Empirical evidence backs this up. According to *The Daily Telegraph*, in Kurdistan—a supposed bastion of INC support—only 9 percent of respondents told pollsters they wanted a Chalabi presidency. Even Chalabi's American patrons doubt his public support. They have scaled back his public operations and dismantled his Free Iraqi Forces. As *The Washington Post* reported in June, Iraq's top civil administrator, L. Paul Bremer, privately told Chalabi and his cadre that they "don't represent the country."

Conservatives should have seen this coming. Chalabi represents the latest incarnation of an archetype: the foreign opposition leader romanticized beyond reason. Everybody knows this romantic strain has afflicted liberals—from admirers of Joseph Stalin, such as Henry Wallace and Edmund Wilson, to glorifiers of Fidel Castro, such as Tom Hayden and Oliver Stone. And everybody knows this because conservatives have long, and justly, chastised the left for what Tom Wolfe famously called "radical chic." During the 1960s, when the right first made this critique, the hardheaded realism that dominated conservative foreign policy prevented it from embracing such hero-worship. But, starting in the 1980s, conservatives, too, began celebrating revolution and insurgency, albeit of the anti-communist variety—a celebration that was enshrined in the Reagan Doctrine. Suddenly, a generation of scruffy Third World guerrilla fighters became right-wing icons.

When the Soviet Union disappeared, this doctrine seemed to fade with it. But the post–September 11 focus on radical Islam has created the conditions for its revival. In fact, some in the Pentagon argue the Bush administration has already reactivated the Reagan Doctrine by supporting the INC and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. As one official told me, "The mold is set. It's very much a return to Reaganite principles of adopting opposition movements." That means Chalabi isn't so much a throwback as the harbinger of a new wave of conservative iconography.

Indeed, there are already examples of what this new wave might look like. Last summer, conservatives began to promote exiled Palestinian banker Omar Karsou as a successor to Yasir Arafat. An op-ed by Robert Pollock in *The Wall Street Journal* trumpeted Karsou beneath the headline,

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"'WE NEED A PALESTINIAN MANDELA.'" The Cheneys, both Dick and Lynne, granted him audiences, where he made his case for assuming Palestinian leadership. But the campaign crumbled, because it was premised on comically wishful thinking. Nelson Mandela, after all, had a mass following. When I asked a neocon supporter of Karsou about his following among Palestinians, she admitted that Karsou was virtually unknown in Palestine and had temporarily quit politics in frustration.

And not all the new freedom fighters entering the conservative pantheon are as innocuous as Karsou. Now that attention is turning from Iraq to Iran, a small but growing legion of conservatives has begun touting the virtues of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, or the People's Mujahedin. In *The Washington Times*, the Hoover Institution's Arnold Beichman has urged the administration to recognize the mujahedin "as a legitimate force for democracy and regime change in the Middle East." Republican Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen has argued, "This group loves the United States; they're assisting us in the war on terrorism." Last year, she convinced 150 House colleagues to sign a letter in support of the mujahedin. The administration itself has been strangely deferential toward the group. It has permitted the mujahedin to keep a camp in Iraq, and, as Elizabeth Rubin reported in *The New York Times Magazine*, "a number of Pentagon hawks and policy makers are advocating that the Mujahideen be removed from the terrorist list and recycled for future use against Iran."

Such support is truly incredible. After all, there's a reason the mujahedin hold down a spot on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations: During the 1970s, it assassinated Americans working in Iran. Starting in the '80s, Saddam Hussein became the group's patron and collaborator, harboring the mujahedin in Iraqi bases. A realist might suggest overlooking this record and embracing the mujahedin for their mischief-making skills. But classifying the group as democratic requires enormous self-deception. By any standard, the organization is a proto-Marxist cult. The husband-and-wife team who runs it manipulates its helots with creepy mind control. They demand celibacy and require attendance at weekly "ideological cleansing" sessions. And there's no quitting this madness. According to Human Rights Watch, when members mused about bolting, the mujahedin threatened to hand them off to Saddam's goons for torture.

The support for the mujahedin reveals the problem with the right's revolutionary romanticism. It is not necessarily that conservatives ally themselves with the wrong foreign proxies. Often those proxies represent the lesser of two evils, or at least the more pro-American of two evils. The trouble is that conservatives come to see any thug, charlatan, or hopeless dreamer who happens to align with U.S. interests as a budding Thomas Jefferson. Squeezing various rebel groups into this ideal type requires a willful ignorance of the facts on the ground. And that ignorance can lead to a deluded foreign policy.

THE RIGHT-WING revolutionary impulse begins with the Reagan Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine begins, by some accounts, with an adventurer named Jack Wheeler. In 1965, fresh from UCLA, Wheeler launched his political career as youth chair of Ronald Reagan's maiden gubernatorial bid. Instead of parlaying his campaign connections into a job with the burgeoning New Right, he followed a mantra of the decade and dropped out. As a child, he had dreamed of exploring exotic locales in the nineteenth-century mode of Henry Morton Stanley. Now, he would indulge this fantasy by leading wealthy Americans on jaunts through Tibet and the African jungle.

When I recently visited him at his Virginia home, just off the banks of the Potomac, Wheeler took me to his basement office. Along one wall was a picture of him dressed as a mujahedin, with a turban wrapped around his sunburned, unshaven face. Along another, he displayed a colorful collection of Asian tribal hats, a shrunken head he acquired in Ecuador, and an old map he bought in 1965. In the middle of our conversation, he led me across the room to take a closer look at the map. "About 1983, I just saw it differently," he explained. By that time, his buddies from the Reagan campaign had gone off to sweet jobs in the White House. And, looking at his treasured map, he had an epiphany about how he could join the Reagan revolution himself. "All these guerrilla wars were taking place inside Soviet colonies. Nobody was calling them colonies, but that's what they were." He pointed to Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola. "I realized that these [conflicts] were not isolated. This was a worldwide rejection of Soviet imperialism. The tables had turned." Wheeler booked a ticket to Washington, where he visited his friend, presidential speechwriter Dana Rohrabacher. "Dana told me that I had to go out there to study these people fighting the Soviets." So, funded by a grant from the libertarian Reason Foundation, Wheeler set off to visit anti-communist insurrections.

After six months among the Nicaraguan Contras, Afghan mujahedin, and African rebels, he landed at Washington's National Airport, where Rohrabacher greeted him. "He drove me straight to the [Old Executive Office Building]. I had been sending him back photos, which I hadn't seen myself at this point. He took me to a room, where there was a slide carousel," as well as speechwriters, officials from the CIA, and Constantine Menges and Paula Dobriansky of the National Security Council. Wheeler began to tell stories of the global phenomenon he had just witnessed. As one White House official told Sidney Blumenthal, then a reporter with *The Washington Post*, "[Wheeler] took random struggles and crystallized the concept that they were part of the same historical movement." Soon after, Reagan's speeches were filled with references to "freedom fighters." And Wheeler became a regular on the conservative speaking circuit, evangelizing on behalf of the counter-revolution. "In the 1960s, there were Marxist guerrilla heroes—Mao, Fidel, Che Guevara," he told me. "Now there

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were anti-Marxist guerrilla leaders. The anti-imperialist liberation struggle shifted one hundred percent." He threw his arms in the air: "That's the gestalt."

To turn the Reagan Doctrine from theory to practice, Wheeler set about creating the antithesis of the Communist International, a broad coalition of anti-Marxist insurgents to be known as the Democratic International. And, in 1985, Wheeler helped convince the conservative drugstore mogul—and defeated New York gubernatorial candidate—Lew Lehrman to finance the venture. Working with Grover Norquist and Jack Abramoff, now arguably the two most powerful Republican lobbyists in Washington, Wheeler invited anti-communist rebel leaders from Nicaragua, Laos, and Afghanistan to Jamba, Angola, the headquarters of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). There, Lehrman gathered his guests and had them sign a communiqué declaring "our solidarity with all freedom movements in the world and ... our commitment to cooperate to liberate our nations from the Soviet imperialists." At a rally in Jamba's stadium, Lehrman handed them framed copies of the American Declaration of Independence and replica Mount Vernon bowls.

There was a reason the meeting took place in Jamba: Savimbi had become the poster child for this new breed of freedom fighter. Like Chalabi, he had a superb understanding of the conservative movement and made frequent trips to Washington to cultivate its activists. Take the itinerary for a 1986 visit: In one week, he attended a seminar at the American Enterprise Institute, hosted by Jeanne Kirkpatrick; a reception thrown by the Heritage Foundation; and another confab at Freedom House. This strategy wasn't just the product of Savimbi's savvy. He had lots of help. UNITA paid a $600,000-per-year retainer to the Republican lobbying firm Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly. Savimbi's allies in South Africa's apartheid government donated consulting work by Reagan's 1980 campaign manager, Stuart Spencer, and a cast of ideologues happily volunteered their services. Norquist became economic adviser. According to Nina J. Easton's book *Gang of Five: Leaders at the Center of the Conservative Crusade*, this entailed ghostwriting pro-capitalist manifestos for *The Wall Street Journal* op-ed page. Savimbi's byline hovered over text proclaiming, "I believe that in Angola the farmer must be exempt from all taxes. The state cannot claim the produce of a farmer's hard work. This would be theft."

It's hard to say who was using whom. But, by mouthing the right words, Savimbi cemented the movement's undying loyalty. The relationship culminated at a 1986 black-tie dinner for the Conservative Political Action Committee. Kirkpatrick delivered a passionate introduction for Savimbi: a "linguist, philosopher, poet, politician, warrior, ... one of

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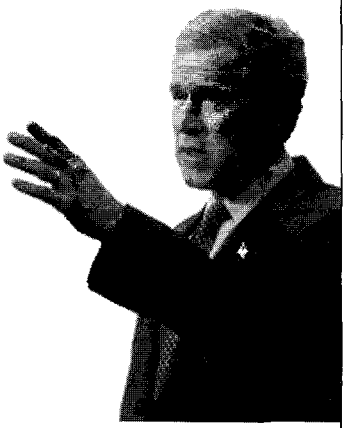

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the few authentic heroes of our time." As she worked herself toward the climactic moment when she would call Savimbi forward to receive an award for his dedicated anti-communism, she intoned, "Real assistance means real weapons! ... Real helicopters, ... real ground-to-air missiles." It was then that Savimbi, a burly man who conformed perfectly to Hollywood's image of the guerrilla leader, ambled to the lectern. The room broke into a chant, "U-NI-TA, U-NI-TA." At this euphoric moment, Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, told a reporter, "If Jonas Savimbi were an American citizen, he would be the presidential candidate of the conservative movement in 1988."

This was an incredible fantasy. Savimbi arguably made a useful pawn in the struggle against Soviet expansionism, but he wasn't any of the things conservatives claimed. Primarily, he wasn't much of an anti-communist. He had trained in China's revolutionary academies, and, less than two years before his paeans to capitalism appeared in the *Journal*, he told a Portuguese magazine of his plans to "socialize production." Savimbi had little trouble with this ideological ambidexterity because, more than Maoism or free-market liberalism, UNITA represented tribalism: The Ovimbundu's struggle against what Savimbi called Angola's "Europeanized elites." After the fall of the Berlin Wall, when foreign money dried up, he dropped all pretenses of ideology and focused his rhetoric entirely on the Ovimbundu's victimhood. In 1989, the Polish journalist Radek Sikorski concluded, "[I]deology is something Savimbi can choose like the fashion of his soldiers' uniforms—patterned to please whoever provides the cloth."

Unfortunately, Savimbi's sins were far greater than hypocrisy. To the credit of *National Review*, it published Sikorski's damning indictment of UNITA, including allegations that it had burned 13 people alive. Such behavior was frighteningly typical. A string of Human Rights Watch reports documented that UNITA violated just about every section of the Geneva Conventions. It indiscriminately used land mines, forcibly conscripted soldiers, and shot down World Food Program flights to starve towns controlled by the government. These complaints were confirmed by UNITA defectors, who also testified to Savimbi's execution of their high-ranking colleagues.

Savimbi himself admitted to many of these allegations, but that didn't shake the faith of his hard-core believers or lead them to scale back their praise. "These are the kind of things which happen in a civil war," the Heritage Foundation's Jeffrey Gayner nonchalantly told the London *Independent* in 1989. Even after Savimbi's murder last year, the accolades continued. His admirers gathered for a dinner at the Army and Navy Club, two blocks from the White House, where Kirkpatrick eulogized Savimbi as "extraordinarily educated, intelligent, and cosmopolitan—a guerrilla leader on our side."

FOR ALL HIS murderous faults, Savimbi did enjoy genuine popular support, with tens of thousands of Angolans voluntarily enlisted in his army. His opponents could never claim he was simply a U.S. concoction. The leaders of the Nicaraguan Contras, on the other hand, were vulnerable to precisely this charge. This isn't to deny the widespread desire to resist the brutal Sandinista government. But the Reagan administration, by all accounts, engineered the political leadership of the Contras, falling in love with a series of counterrevolutionaries who broke down under the weight of their own deficiencies.

One such leader was Adolfo Calero, who became Washington's Contra of choice in the mid-'80s. After graduating from Notre Dame, Calero had gone on to run Managua's Coca-Cola bottling plant. Despite ruling-class ties, Calero lambasted the Somoza dictatorship for its shabby economic management. He convinced his fellow businessmen to go on strike against the regime and helped launch the Authentic Conservative Party. All this right-wing activism meant that, when the Sadinisitas seized power, he ultimately had little choice but to take up a life of exile in Miami. It also made him an easy sell to American conservatives, a pitch enhanced by Calero's alliance with Republican consultant Roger Stone, from UNITA's lobbying firm. In direct-mail solicitations, Stone compared Calero to Washington at Valley Forge. Calero also expertly saddled up to the conservative bar. He became a fixture at Heritage and hit the campaign trail for favorite candidates. At the 1987 North Carolina Republican convention, he joined Jesse Helms on the dais. "Nicaragua is way below the Mason-Dixon line," he bellowed. "That makes me a rebel like you." He subsequently stumped with 1988 presidential contenders Pete du Pont and Bob Dole.

Conservatives endowed Calero with an aura of dissidence, but, in truth, he resembled a classic caudillo. The Contra supporter Robert Leiken, now with the Nixon Center, accused him of practicing politics in the "style of Somoza," mimicking the dictator's lack of devotion to the democratic spirit. And the similarity to the dictatorship went beyond style. Calero's forces included remnants of the ancien régime's thuggish National Guard and other revanchists with less-than-liberal proclivities. While Calero's army may not have committed as many atrocities as the socialist regime, it wasn't contending for any humanitarian awards, either. When groups like Americas Watch condemned the Contras for their "deliberate use of terror," they may have exaggerated specifics, but they got the essence right. As Robert Kagan put it in his political history of the war, *A Twilight Struggle*, the Contras "treated ... civilians as enemies, and on this basis justified their rape, torture, and murder. Some of the Contras simply enjoyed killing the 'piricuacos' or rabid dogs, as they called the Sandinistas and their official supporters."

By the mid-'80s, these abuses had given the struggle a bad rap. To put a better face on the war, in 1986 the Reagan administration began pushing "Contra reform." It wanted human rights monitors to keep an eye on the rebel army and a leadership shakeup that would elevate politicians with a more progressive bent than Calero. In part, Calero had created his own headache by blithely dismissing the human rights problem. "There have been isolated cases of

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human rights violations, as there are in every war," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1985. And, even though the maintenance of congressional support for the Contras depended on enacting reforms, Calero vociferously objected to the changes. He was willing to sacrifice the cause to preserve his own power, and in the end this selfishness alienated even supporters, such as Oliver North. (One of North's deputies, Rob Owen, deemed Calero a "strongman" with followers motivated by "greed and power.") In 1985, President Reagan had declared that Calero and the Contra leadership represented the "moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers." By 1987, the Reagan administration had grown so disillusioned that it forced Calero to resign from the leadership of the United Nicaraguan Opposition.

BUT IT WAS in Afghanistan that the conservative imagination diverged most disturbingly from reality. In 1989, Dan Quayle told the Conservative Political Action Committee, "The degree of courage, tenacity, and skill exhibited by Afghan freedom fighters is really almost beyond belief and almost beyond praise." But, well before the horrors of successive Afghan regimes made clear that these "freedom fighters" merely wanted to replace the totalitarianism of godless communism with the totalitarianism of Sharia, the mujahedin's thuggish tendencies were clear to those willing to look. Take the warlord Gulbulddin Hekmatyar, the mujahedin leader to receive the most American aid. As an Islamic student leader at Kabul University, he encouraged his followers to splash acid on the faces of unveiled women and fire guns at their uncovered legs. During the anti-Soviet jihad, he betrayed a similar tendency toward indiscriminate cruelty, assassinating Afghan intellectuals and Western journalists. And, as recently as last month, he ordered his followers to "cut off the hands of the foreign meddlers."

How could conservatives have been so badly mistaken? For starters, they paid only the slightest attention to the ideology of the mujahedin. And, when they did consider political Islam, they didn't treat it as a serious doctrine but, rather, the expression of noble savages and epic warriors. In 1982, the Heritage Foundation's James Phillips wrote, "The Afghans' courage is fortified by traditional Islamic beliefs: if he kills an enemy in the jihad (holy war) and he is revered as a ghazi (Islamic warrior) and if he falls in battle he becomes a shaheed (martyr) who reaps great rewards in paradise." After the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon, it became clear where this eschatology could lead. But conservatives didn't want to ask the kind of questions that might tarnish their heroes.

In lieu of an honest evaluation, they remade the Afghans into foreign versions of themselves, religious victims of secular zealotry. William McGurn, now *The Wall Street Journal*'s chief editorial writer, described the mujahedin as "simply ornery mountain folk who have not cottoned to a foreign power" that "attacked their faith." A Heritage backgrounder used the phrase "nongovernmental organization" to describe the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamiat-e-Islami Party, and other Islamists who funded the Afghan war—language that might have made them eligible for the Faith-Based Initiative. And, to bolster this image, some repeated a tale about a visit Robert Bork's son Charles made to the mujahedin leader Abdul Haq. When Bork first asked for an appointment, word came back that Haq had no interest seeing the son of "that hashish-smoking judge." It was immediately apparent that Haq had confused Bork with Douglas Ginsburg, the Reagan Supreme Court nominee who withdrew from contention after admitting to sharing marijuana with students. When Haq learned of the distinction between Bork and Ginsburg, he warmly welcomed his guest. The implicit lesson of the story was clear: that the mujahedin are God-fearing men with high moral standards. And it was made without any recognition that the Afghans practiced a form of puritanism far more extreme than any Southern Baptist.

WHEN I VISITED Jack Wheeler, he showed me the books on his desk. They included *Sleeping With the Devil*, Robert Baer's polemic against Saudi Arabia, and David Pryce-Jones's *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*. He picked up one and told me, "It's amazing how similar Islam is to Marxism. I mean, it's the same thing all over again." This has become a standard interpretation on the right and has logically led to talk of reapplying the Reagan Doctrine. But the map looks a lot different now than when Wheeler first considered the possibilities of global anti-Soviet revolution. Not so many counter-Islamist insurgencies burn across the globe. So reviving the Reagan Doctrine could require digging deeper into the bag of opposition groups for rebels that have even less popular support or even worse track records than their '80s analogs.

And such stretching will exact a toll. Extolling the virtues of cults like the Iranian mujahedin doesn't simply cheapen rhetoric about liberal democracy, it cheapens conservatism itself. Ever since Edmund Burke, conservatives have made skepticism about revolutions and revolutionaries a central tenet of their politics. As Irving Kristol rephrased the classic complaint in a 1972 essay, "to think we have it in our power to change people so as to make the human estate wonderfully better than it is, remarkably different from what it is, and in very short order, is to assume that this generation of Americans can do what no other generation in all of human history could accomplish." This rigid traditionalism has been sometimes deployed to justify turning away from injustice. But it was also a source of humaneness, a bulwark against rash plans for social upheaval, a vital warning about the violent excesses of ideological fervor, a reminder that revolutions often end in tears. In this new era, with grand plans for remaking the map and new heroes being born, we could stand to be reminded of these old dictates, which add a touch of realism to right-wing idealism and offer a salutary dose of conservatism for conservatives. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Against Odds

SOME FILMS SEEM TO MAKE THIS country glow from coast to coast. They embody fantasies and desires that are sometimes not even previously known to the viewer, and they do it so soothingly that—for two hours anyway—that viewer is in fabricated paradise. Two instances were *E.T.* and *Forrest Gump.* Now there is a new candidate for this papier-mâché Olympus.

SEABISCUIT
(Universal)

BUFFALO SOLDIERS
(Miramax)

SEABISCUIT, adapted by the director Gary Ross from Laura Hillenbrand's popular book, renders a racehorse as national idol. Those of us who think of racing as a beautified excuse for gambling (despite the blather about the improvement of the breed) had better mind our manners. *Seabiscuit* purges and exalts. More—it transforms. Most sports depend on athletes: horse racing, no matter how important the trainers and jockeys, depends on animals. How better to reduce this difference, to put us in the midst of things, than to give the animal a few human characteristics—courage, resourcefulness, heart? When this is done neatly, it is not only the horse who competes; we join it in our theater seats, equipped for a time with four legs. Aesop endowed animals with human traits to teach us lessons. *Seabiscuit* almost does the reverse. By means of Ross's adroit shooting and editing, we ourselves pound bravely along the track.

Good racing pictures have always done this in some measure, but they have just been about racing. Here there are more rewards. This horse was no magnificent creature that might make us feel puny: he was small and imperfectly formed, like so many of us. Yet he *won.* (He was Horse of the Year in 1938.) To top it all, his career took place in the black years of the Depression, and, because of his long uphill fight, he became a beacon to the depressed. Shots of breadlines and soup kitchens are intercut with his victories. (The film does not explain how, in those tight days, so many thousands could buy tickets to Seabiscuit's races and bet on them.) The history of this horse has something to inspire anyone who is not fussy about sources of inspiration.

In the structure of his screenplay Ross has taken a risk, and he has not quite brought it off. He begins his story very early. Instead of starting with Seabiscuit and his team in place, then flashing back to show us how they all got together, Ross begins with the earlier lives of the horse's owner, trainer, and jockey, who had not previously known one another. The script takes so long to interweave their separate stories that we begin to wonder if we might be at the wrong film. The title character enters late. Once all four join up, we are able to settle into a comfy story that would be largely predictable even if the facts were not known. As usual in such stories, there is a disaster just before the climactic event. (The film does not tell us what happened to the miscreants who caused that disaster.) But, as usual, it is overcome.

Jeff Bridges plays the wealthy owner with a talent that here chiefly manifests itself in ease and appeal. (When the stock market crashes in October 1929, he gets a phone call from his broker, followed by news clips of Wall Street and dire effects, but the crash doesn't seem to affect this man's wealth.) In almost every racing picture there is a taciturn, gnomic trainer who sees the facts of a matter when others are misled. Here he is played by Chris Cooper with about 90 percent of the laconic depth that the role needs. Tobey Maguire, a bit large for the job, is the jockey. Maguire is flexible enough, but he rarely gets past the point where he thinks that being unactorish is enough.

John Schwartzman, the cinematographer, does particularly well with the faces of the many minor characters who pass through—acutely selected by Ross. Further, guided by Ross, Schwartzman has lifted the film with exciting shots of the racing horses. My own favorite racing picture remains *National Velvet* (1944), in which the adolescent Elizabeth Taylor disguised herself as a boy in order to be a jockey in the British Grand National Steeplechase, but that film was merely about a person. It did not offer the same chances for equine transmutation as *Seabiscuit.*

The title of **BUFFALO SOLDIERS** has, as far as I can see, elicited little curiosity. But the term has an interesting history. It was first applied in mockery to those Union Army soldiers, many of them freed slaves, who were sent out West after the Civil War to keep peace and were joshed as having little to do besides policing the buffalo. This picture shows us modern soldiers who also do not have a great deal to do, but these men have declined into rogues. (I've read that a Buffalo Soldier Cavalry Association has protested the film's title.)

Buffalo Soldiers was completed in 2001 but was not released then because of September 11. Why the film is thought opportune now is a mystery. The screenplay, by the director Gregor Jordan and three collaborators, was drawn from a novel by Robert O'Connor. The locus is an American army base near Stuttgart in 1989, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the soldiers we see are mostly busy with non-military activities: drug dealing, supply peddling, arms thefts. Also on the plate are nasty beatings among themselves (including a battering by black soldiers of a lone white soldier), a soldier's accidental death in a game, a rampage by a doped-up tank commander through a town, and an affair of a private with his commanding officer's wife, whom he abandons for his sergeant's daughter.

The film's intent was presumably satirical in the vein of *Catch-22* or *M*A*S*H,* but the satire is so weak, the action so devoid of comic perspective, that we are left with a naked gaggle of

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ugly episodes. And for whose enlightenment? It has been quite a while since Kipling told us that "single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints," and he probably did not think it hot news even then.

The distaste that this picture evokes is not because it falsifies. (Though I wonder if most of our troops are ex-cons and high school dropouts, as we are told.) Everything we see may be based on fact; yet, because it fails to approach anything like wry Joseph Heller bitterness, the picture is reduced to a stink of exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of American troops are now stationed in various countries. Anyone sufficiently alert to be concerned about this matter is also alert enough to know that the plaster saints among them cannot be many. *Buffalo Soldiers* is on a level with those films that reveal the "truth" about sex in high schools or drinking in colleges—a salivating exposé. It makes David O. Russell's *Three Kings* (1999), about American soldiers in Kuwait after the Gulf war, look even more pungent.

Joaquin Phoenix, who has the leading role here, is another of the Tobey Maguire breed, those latter-day American actors who, without striking personality, have little more than their persons to offer. Well, Phoenix does manage to suggest sometimes that there is more to him than what we see and hear. Ed Harris, a true actor, is quietly buffoonish as a confused colonel. Scott Glenn, as a malevolent top sergeant, has the kind of lean face that the camera is always glad to find. ■

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

When Egos Collide

SINCE THEATER IS AN ESSENtially collective activity, it is not always easy to determine whose imagination is exercising the greatest influence over the shape of a production: the director or the designer, the playwright or the actors. Nor should it be easy. The ideal production is a seamless web. One sign of a faulty collaboration is when there is no doubt about who has been running the show.

THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI
(Second Stage Theater)

HENRY V
(Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival)

Primarily because of the way she dominates the creative confederation, the director and adaptor Mary Zimmerman has always struck me less as a genuine originator than as an academic fellow traveler, a pale imitation of such visionaries as Robert Wilson and Martha Clarke. Obviously I am not suggesting that theatrical auteurs lack strong egos or individualistic visions; but the best ones are usually able to weave themselves invisibly into the theatrical tapestry. Zimmerman despite her considerable imaginative resources, often seems to be waving an artistic plume, one that has succeeded in attracting considerable notice.

THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI comes to New York from Chicago on a wave of ecstatic reviews. Perhaps Chicago theater has become so supersaturated in gritty urban realism that anything even remotely eccentric looks like a stylistic breakthrough. Another possible explanation for Zimmerman's advance press is the weighty associative nature of her material. Anyone with the nerve to stage the arcane jottings of a fifteenth-century genius surely deserves a gold star for chutzpah. What next? The IOUs of Fyodor Dostoevsky? The cigar bands of Sigmund Freud?

Though hardly dramatic, Leonardo's notebooks do contain an intriguing variety of material that might form the basis for some kind of theatrical event. As Zimmerman notes, Leonardo had "an inexhaustibly curious and compulsive mind intent on describing, cataloguing, and recreating with ever greater accuracy the experience of life." A universal man, alternately preoccupied with "oratory, astronomy, perspective, light, physics, mathematics, philosophy, engineering, dreams, and fables," Leonardo ruminated in his secret notebooks about

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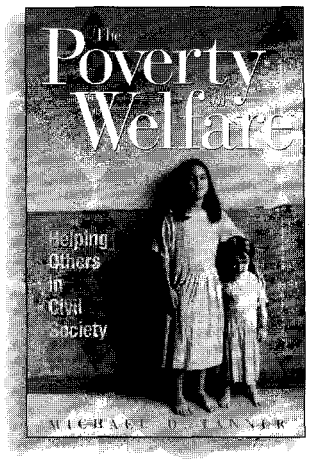

The Poverty of Welfare: Helping Others in Civil Society

by Michael D. Tanner

The 1996 welfare reform was the most significant change in social welfare policy in nearly 60 years. *The Poverty of Welfare* examines the impact of that reform within the context of welfare's history and concludes that, while welfare reform was a step in the right direction, we have a long way to go to fix a deeply troubled system. Tanner suggests that we should be working toward the total elimination of government welfare programs, substituting a renewed and invigorated program of private charity and economic opportunity.
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anything that interested him, inscribing his thoughts in a crabbed backward script that could be deciphered only in a mirror. There is certainly enough here for a fascinating intellectual biography. Yet Zimmerman has preferred to focus not on the soul of this great Renaissance man but rather on his vagrant ideas and daydreams, with the declared purpose of spinning them into variations on the theme of human development.

The opening event of the piece is its one truly dramatic moment—Zimmerman's staging of a memory that Leonardo recorded of a time when he was an infant in his cradle and a bird batted his mouth with its wings (which led to a lifelong obsession with birds and flight). The curious thing about what follows, given Zimmerman's considerable research and obvious respect for Leonardo's mind, is how little of the man's thinking emerges. The actors narrate generous selections from the notebooks, but never without some parallel commentary—distracting gestures, ironic asides, contemporary behavior (such as lighting cigarettes), and other forms of synchronous busy work, all performed in unison like a piece of modern dance. Apparently the director finds it difficult to refrain from measuring her own imagination against Leonardo's. And it does not help that her actors, who have been drilled within an inch of their lives, often substitute stamina and smirks for depth and imagination. The result is an evening of color and high jinks but little forward movement or cumulative power and virtually no passion or emotion.

Instead of subtext, Zimmerman substitutes choreography; instead of textual investigation, she gives us extraneous gestures. In the section called "Eighteen Positions of Man," the performers, with ludicrous and exaggerated antics, enact Leonardo's descriptions of what it means to be still, to move, to be upright, to be suspended, and so on. In "Sleep," a coffin filled with water is yanked out onto the stage and a fish is pulled from the water. These are meant to be suggestive images. They are not. They are simply among the many instances where the director tries to gussy up Leonardo's musings with extraneous references. The result of this collision of egos is that potentially golden ideas are transmuted into lead, and what should be transcendent often looks smug and self-satisfied.

The thinness of the concept is reflected in an arbitrary visual design by the usually dependable Scott Bradley, which contains, for reasons unclear to me, a broken skylight and a lot of filing cabinets. Also, given the delicacy of Leonardo's line and palette, Mara Blumenfeld's primary-color costumes seem inappropriately garish. In what is obviously meant to be the highlight of the evening—Leonardo's celebrated reflections on perspective—a number of strings are pulled across the stage, a cyclorama of mountains and lakes appears, and the actors sit on the floor making childish scribbles. It is just one of the many instances in this production when what is graceless, gauche, and clumsy is substituted for what is lovely, thoughtful, and poetic, and an incomparable artist is made to look like a birthday clown entertaining suburban kiddies.

Mark Wing-Davey has staged **Henry V** for the New York Shakespeare Festival at the Delacorte as if it were the occasion for a tag sale of garden furniture. Hundreds of gold-painted folding chairs festoon the Central Park stage, some of them placed up and down an inclining wall. These, along with a lot of burlap bags piled on top of each other, essentially constitute Mark Wendland's design, though there is a lovely view of Belvedere Castle in the distance that might have made a perfect setting for the surrender of Harfleur.

The first staged thing we see is a straggle of Elizabethan courtiers, carrying theater programs, taking their seats in these folding chairs. Since most of the acting company is wearing Gabriel Berry's elegant modern clothes, these costumed spectators are puzzling. Yes, they serve a comic admonitory purpose when the ushers confiscate their cell phones and cameras. But perhaps they also have an ironic function: reversing the usual pattern of modern audiences watching Elizabethan characters in the theater.

The problem is not that Wing-Davey lacks ideas, but that he has too many of them, and they do not all cohere into a single interpretation. The concept is as cluttered as the chair-strewn stage. Henry (Liev Schreiber) arrives to hear debate over his claim to France. He is wearing a business suit, as are his courtiers, looking like members of a corporate board. Henry takes his place at a conference table in front of a nameplate reading "Henry V," as the Archbishop of Canterbury (David Costabile) and the Bishop of Ely (Peter Gerety) enact the long scene justifying Henry's right to France with the aid of genealogical charts and area maps. (All that's missing is a slide projector and a pointer.) When Henry receives his gift of tennis balls from the Dauphin, he opens the vacuum can with a whoosh and throws the balls at the French ambassador.

Wing-Davey obviously has a knack for translating Shakespearean actions into contemporary equivalents. Virtually every moment in the text is assigned a modern illustration. What the director seems to lack is any sense of the political or historical significance of the play, not to mention any reason for doing it today. How do you stage the opening scene of *Henry V* after September 11 without hearing at least some similarity between Canterbury's legalistic pretext for war against France and Bush's questionable arguments for a pre-emptive strike against Iraq? The archbishop's dispute of the French contention that "no woman shall succeed in Salic land" (borrowed from Holinshed) certainly sounds no more specious than the president's assertions that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were in cahoots or that Iraq was trying to procure uranium from Niger. Olivier treated this scene as a comic interlude. Kenneth Branagh made it the sinister, cynical act of a callow opportunist. Wing-Davey just accessorizes it.

If this is illustrated Shakespeare, it is nevertheless generally well-acted. Schreiber plays the king without mischief or merriment, in a state of somber melancholy, as if he had entirely forgotten Prince Hal and exorcised all memory of Falstaff. After sharing a photo-op with the conspirators, Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, he dispatches them without a thought. His hair cropped, his eyes glazed, wearing a military tunic with rows of battle ribbons (though his only military service was at Shrewsbury, killing Hotspur), he is coldness personified, even in his reflective soliloquy about ceremony. Still, Schreiber shows us the traumas of warfare as well as any actor since Ian Holm, describing an arc from green youth to tragic maturity, trying to ignore the spiritual wounds caused by Bardolph's execution and his slaughter of French prisoners, and finally withdrawing into a kind of royal battle fatigue.

The comic scenes, too, are very vigorously executed by Gerety, a fiery turkey-cock as Fluellen; by Mark Gerald Douglas as a racially sensitive Captain Morris;

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and particularly by Bronson Pinchot as a fine bombastic Pistol. Fresh from the world of mods and rockers, Pinchot wears a huge upswept pompadour and a sports jacket down to his knees, smooching with his bride (the Hostess in a white wedding dress) before going at Nym with a hammer. It is a performance in the tradition of Peter Sellers, at once outrageously extravagant and yet oddly real.

Falstaff's page is played by Nicole Leach, who, in one of many interesting doublings in the evening, takes off her cap, her pants, and the strap around her breasts to transform into a nude Princess Katherine, taking a shower onstage. This lovely actress speaks French with an impeccable accent, and she and her lady Alice (Mercedes Herrero) are very amusing translating French body parts into broken English. Relating to the obviously smitten Schreiber as a woman both coy and unforgiving, Leach helps to make the wooing scene one of the high points of the evening.

There are many appealing moments in the production: Mistress Quickly narrating Falstaff's death with a head full of curlers, the Siege of Harfleur performed to the accompaniment of earsplitting rock 'n' roll, the French discussing the weakness of the English while oiling their bodies around a swimming pool. But most of these effects are decorative. We are never conscious of any compelling reason for doing this play other than to provide good actors with meaty roles and an inventive director with contemporary equivalences. Shouldn't theater have a more urgent purpose than giving talented people a chance to show off? ■

David Bromwich
Blinding Blandness

THE LANGUAGE POLICE:
HOW PRESSURE GROUPS RESTRICT
WHAT STUDENTS LEARN
By Diane Ravitch
(Alfred A. Knopf, 255 pp., $24)

DIANE RAVITCH IS A LEADING scholar of secondary education whose advocacy of a K-12 curriculum drew considerable notice in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There were good reasons for worry then. Perhaps we worry less now that three out of five college seniors can place the Civil War within the correct half-century. Ravitch became an assistant secretary in the Department of Education under President George H.W. Bush and spoke out for voluntary national tests, which she thought should be managed by the National Assessment Governing Board and not the Department of Education. President Clinton followed up on this suggestion and appointed Ravitch to the governing board, but voluntary tests were never approved by Congress. Democrats opposed them because the funds were earmarked for tests alone; Republicans opposed them on the ground that nationally supervised tests were a harbinger of centralized control of education.

In the course of this honorable defeat, Ravitch made a discovery. As public education is now ordered in the United States, you could not devise an exacting standard test in literature or history or social studies even if the political will were there. What stands in the way is a network of "bias and sensitivity panels" to which the publishers of the tests defer. And since publishers depend on similar panels to check every detail of textbooks, it is almost impossible to put together a coherent textbook in history, literature, or social studies.

The Language Police is a documentary account of the methods and the impact of the bias and sensitivity panels. Yet the book has broad consequences for one's thinking about all education, and I recommend it to anyone interested in the molding of public discourse in America. Ravitch began by reading closely the reviews of a draft of the Voluntary National Test, and she worked from there to the panel reviews for tests generally as well as for textbooks. Her tone is measured and judicious, never strident. She believes that for the past fifteen years or so, a regime of de facto censorship has prevailed over large tracts of secondary education. Nobody aimed at this result. The culprits are fretful citizens, acting from moral and religious anxiety, who have been allowed to become meddlers in public affairs. Their way of achieving a better world is to enforce a nicer classroom.

At the bottom of this wish is probably a fantasy—sponsored in our society by lawyers and therapists, and abetted by many politicians and some teachers—that there exists a human right never to have a bad experience. The bias and sensitivity handlers make the reasonable deduction that nobody should have a bad experience in the classroom. If the only way to ensure this is to remove from the classroom all surprising stimuli of any kind, that is a price they are willing to pay. Ravitch's case is fairly made by the first third of the book. The rest is additional evidence, background from the 1950s and the 1970s (when monitors of the educational right and left tasted power and first tightened the screws), some book lists to offset the bad lists and the bowdlerized mush of the handlers, and finally a plea: "We can stop censorship."

HOW DOES THIS REGIME OF censorship work? To an outside view, the bias and sensitivity panels have been assigned the role performed at a newspaper or a magazine by fact-checkers. But their factual authority is also moral authority. Imagine, then, behind every marginal query the furrowed brow of a priest who can set the fallible author to quaking with the level words, "Did you write this?"

Whole institutions buckle at the challenge. The Educational Testing Service, Ravitch learned, makes it a practice to discard a question that draws even one such query or qualm. It is not worth the fight. From her own encounter with the panels, Ravitch concludes that their comments "have the inevitable effect of stripping away everything that is potentially thought-provoking." It is a pretty sweeping accusation, but her book supports it convincingly.

David Bromwich is a professor of English at Yale University. He is the author of POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS *(Yale University Press) and co-editor of a new edition of John Stuart Mill's* ON LIBERTY *(Yale University Press).*

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The Voluntary National Test was contracted to Riverside Publishing, the producer of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills—"one of the most esteemed tests in the nation," according to Ravitch. The Riverside guidelines for test questions forbid the following topics because they are "emotionally charged":

> Abortion; creatures that are thought to be scary or dirty, like scorpions, rats, and roaches; death and disease; disrespectful or criminal behavior; evolution; expensive consumer goods; magic, witchcraft, the supernatural; personal appearance (such as height and weight); politics; religion; social problems (such as child abuse, animal abuse, and addiction); unemployment; unsafe situations; weapons and violence.

Even the most casual reader will detect the hand of the right-to-life and animal rights lobbies and maybe a patrolmen's benevolent association. A broader and more pervasive influence is the fundamentalist religious right. Test questions must "avoid any mention of fossils or dinosaurs." These topics—one must say it again—are *forbidden,* not just framed by a warning to handle with care. But how do you construct a social studies test without bringing up politics or religion? How to mention work, or employment, without trailing a fringe of a hint of its opposite, unemployment? The world in which the tests and textbooks are required to take place is not merely fictional. It is a world that has been methodically purged of reality.

THIS RESULT IS A CALCULATED effect of an entente cordiale between censors of the left and of the right. The parties do not consult each other formally. They do not have to. Each works through the medium of the test and textbook publishers. Each is able to gauge the other's influence. And it must be supposed that each is pleased and comforted by the other's success. Part of this story was told a decade ago by Joan DelFattore in *What Johnny Shouldn't Read,* a valuable history of the textbook wars. DelFattore pointed out, as Ravitch does less prominently, the all-importance of the Texas and California markets in securing the fortune of any textbook. If you can rope in those big states, you have a winner. But to a textbook publisher, California means the multicultural left and Texas means the religious right. They can be brought together only by the most skillful juggling and blending.

Or perhaps the metaphor should be cutting and pasting—more cutting than pasting. Ravitch describes the symmetry well when she says the right-wing censors believe that if children "read stories about disobedient children, they will be disobedient; if they read stories that conflict with their parents' values, they might abandon their religion." Thus the purpose of reading becomes the reinforcement of "appropriate moral behavior." Left-wing censors as well, starting from the maxim that you are what you read, "want children to read only descriptions of the world as they think it should be." Schoolchildren are permitted to read either about a simple world that was or a simple world that will be. Commonly they get a thin Panglossian gruel combining elements of both.

READERS WHO WENT TO SCHOOL a generation ago may assume that Ravitch is only describing the familiar process by which reality is altered for harmless consumption in the classroom. But what is amazing is the assiduousness with which the garden now is kept sterile to make sure it stays free of weeds. A story submitted for the Voluntary National Test concerned a "heroic young blind man hiking up an icy trail to climb Mt. McKinley." What could be more inspirational? This story was pronounced guilty of regional bias, because its details of hiking and mountain-climbing favored students who live in such regions. It was also guilty of (what might seem counterintuitive) disability bias: the success of the hiker could be taken to imply that, ordinarily, blind people do not take such risks and are worse off than those with normal sight. Regional bias, when you come to think of it, is a plausible charge against a story that takes place anywhere; but it is used by the sensitivity handlers in some remarkable ways. They objected to a capsule biography of Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor who designed Mount Rushmore—about which Ravitch notes, in her deadpan manner, "Whether one likes or hates it, it is there." The mere naming of this monument or its sculptor, it was feared, "might offend Lakota Indians, who wish that the sculpture were not there." A story about an owl had to be deleted because "the owl is associated with death in some other cultures," and the negative connotations might make students uncomfortable.

You cannot set out to construct a selection so morally, politically, and religiously correct that it is sure to evade a shocking charge of some kind. Take the story of "a legendary dolphin that guided ships through a dangerous channel." Ravitch observes that the testmaker, "perhaps in anticipation of a bias review," omitted "the part of the legend in which a passenger on one ship shoots the faithful dolphin, which survives but never guides that particular ship again." That would seem a fair inoculation against the twin perils of death trauma and vengeance trauma. But no: from the perspective of the handlers, the problem here again was regional bias, in a peculiarly disguised and insidious form. The ocean, too, is a region. Students who read this sample and did not live by the sea could become, while taking the test, mind-wrackingly disabled by the envious thought of those who do live there.

Can it be that the only way out of the trap is allegory? Consider the fate of the passage describing a rotting stump in a forest, in which "a succession of insects, birds, plants, and animals" come to dwell in peace. A story with a charmed life, you might think—décor, plot, and dramatis personae all smarmily rigged to suck up to every imaginable patron, from the Rotary Club to UNICEF; and, to top it off, a no-fault environmental message about nature's own ecology. But, again, no. The bias committee voted unanimously to reject the friendly rotting stump. "Youngsters who have grown up in a housing project may be distracted by similarities to their own living conditions. An emotional response may be triggered." Here one may safely say that all the ugliness of the scene was in the minds of the sensitive censors.

THE ABOVE EXAMPLES MAY seem morally unified in one way: all are concerned with bias against the unprivileged. But that turns out to be a shallow and misleading generalization. The truth is that the censors deny that there is such a thing as privilege. They insist on a world that is hospitable alike to smart and dumb, rich and poor, able and incapable. A story proposed for the test concerned a rich baker who sued a poor man for smelling his goods and then not buying anything. The baker argues in court that

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the poor man "stole" the smells; the judge is unimpressed and chides him for his meanness. A harmless and genial story, but rejected by the sensitivity panel—first on the ground that it set up a class antagonism between rich and poor, and second because it showed the poor man unable to do anything to remedy his poverty. "I could not understand," says Ravitch with dismay, "how reviewers could regard this passage as biased against the poor traveler unless they failed to grasp the point of the story." Though she does not use the word totalitarian, the casuistry that puzzles her is a pure product of the totalitarian mind.

What kind of question succeeds? "Analyze the effects of a poor diet on black women." An absurdly strained effort of edification, as Ravitch is quick to notice, since a poor diet has equally negative effects on all people. Here is an apparently similar question: "Identify cultural advantages of urban living." But that is a banned question. Why? Because it might make the non-urban students feel depressed. And well may they feel depressed. Cities have real advantages: about this Federico Fellini and James Madison are agreed. It is a fact universally acknowledged that the greatness of American cities is painful to kids from the sticks, the dumps, the cornpone redneck backwoods, the vastland flatland heartland darkness of our republic under the night, the blasted suburbs and knee-bend lane-ends where the zombie cellular people live—if you call that living. Just possibly, the sentence above would have slipped under the radar of the sensitivity handlers. World-weary misanthropy bias is not yet on their charts.

This leads us to the problem of stereotypes. "Men," Ravitch reports, "may not appear as plumbers and lawyers; women can." So, too, "women must not be shown as weepy and emotional and men must not be shown as strong and brave." In the world postulated by the bias panels, Ravitch adds, "women would be breadwinners; African Americans would be academics; Asian Americans would be athletes; and no one would be a wife or a mother." The bias handlers have been transfixed by a truth about prejudice that they have then gone on to misapply. Prejudices are wrong when they conduce to selfishness and cruelty and support the blindness of human beings toward the facts of the individual case. But prejudices have to do with judgments, as stereotypes have to

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do with types. Forgetting this, the expert panel on test content, in the quest for a content that should be stereotype-free, found itself obliged to shun every type, kind, rule, probability, and likelihood, and so to reduce all representation of persons and situations to a tepid and colorless medium. You are allowed to portray nothing but the hopeful case that runs contrary to probability and in splendid defiance of stereotype—the single mother who works as a plumber in the morning and in the afternoon tutors the neighbor's son in calculus; the Wall Street lawyer who retires at fifty-five to become a gourmet cook and support his wife through medical school.

California washes out the language. Texas dumps the content down the drain. This formula will be found to explain many otherwise mysterious phenomena of the censorship regime. Thus we have Texas to thank for the caution against fossils and dinosaurs. And California, no doubt, for this: African tribes must be referred to as "groups"; huts should be "little houses"; the historically accurate sentence "women were granted the vote in 1920" gives way to the accurate but more uplifting "women won the vote in 1920." Two unintended effects of such rules deserve to be noted. First, they shrink the working vocabulary of readers. "Little houses" does not call up the same picture as "huts," but if a generation grows up never learning of "huts," then "little houses" is all they will say. Second, the prohibitions drastically foreshorten the range of moods, voices, and possible tenses of English grammar. The correction "women won the vote" was also determined by the opportunity—favored by almost all composition teachers—to exchange the supposedly weak passive to the always preferable active voice. But now and then in reality something happens to someone, and the passive voice may give the more accurate impression.

LET US PASS FROM BEAN-counting to the higher criticism. A full-length book proposed for classroom adoption requires an array of families and households of every type—two-parent, one-parent, aunt-and-uncle-centered, families with older siblings in charge, households with other adults in charge. After a drawn-out attempt to conciliate the panels for one book, editors at Holt rejoiced that they had attained a balance of male and female characters, only to see the revised count emerge from a Texas feminist subpanel who, when they threw in the animals, found that actually males outnumbered females two to one. "Children of this age," said one of these second-round critics, "are influenced by a story about Mr. Rabbit just as much as they are influenced by a story about Mr. Jones." To say nothing of Mr. McGregor.

The protocols of race, age, and gender make a particular sorrow for illustrators, who are liable to feel their pencils guided through every stroke of every frame. Some of the best have quit in exhaustion and despair; but they are not the saddest victims. One comes away from *The Language Police* impressed above all at how shabbily the cops on the bias panels, and their vigilante deputies in focus groups, have behaved toward those who try to meet them more than halfway. Ravitch's account of the multicultural battering endured by Gary Nash's multicultural textbooks is grimly instructive. Here was an anti-establishment, anti-consensus, eclectic, and well-meaning historian, and they could not leave him for even a moment unhindered and unrebuked. At least, after the denunciations and the revisions, he got the California contract.

Censorship in California is run by committees and communities. In Texas, it is the family business of Mel and Norma Gabler—a cottage industry with national ramifications. The Gablers are a sensitive two-person alarm system calibrated to trip at any hint of anti-family, anti-Christian, anti-American views. Most publishers quickly learn to appease them by a pre-emptive self-censorship. To enter the house of the Gablers in peace, you must undertake to assure them that bad behavior such as lying, cheating, stealing, or violence of any kind has been "*clearly* resolved within the framework of the selection." Anthology editors also are invited to ask themselves a question: "Does any part of the selection (even one word or sentence) imply a support for the theory of evolution?" The cosmetic methodology of such warnings has now made converts well beyond Texas. This accounts for the scrubbing of an article on Matthew Shepard ("murdered because he was gay," as Ravitch accurately says) to remove all mention of homosexuality.

THE SECOND HALF OF *THE Language Police* suggests that Ravitch has a cause at heart besides exposure and emancipation. She would like schools to offer their students real works of literature to read. Here she is fighting an anesthetic protectionism more than a generation old—a trait perhaps inseparable from the moralism that Tocqueville associated with the American distrust of eccentricity. Great writing, from *Coriolanus* to *Oblomov,* tends to be eccentric. It may be wise for literature teachers not to say this too often or too loudly.

A less defensible sort of prudence was shown in the "standards" for literature sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Readers Association. These standards were published in 1996 after funding had been suspended in 1994 by the Clinton administration. The cause cited for suspension had been lack of content. And the standards do indeed lack content: a perfect lack, perfectly achieved. They mention not a single author or a single book that students should read. Meanwhile, literature, spelling, grammar, and composition are melted down (shall we say melded?) and re-christened "language arts"—allowing class time to be spent on fusion activities not discernibly connected with reading, writing, or grammar. This is a familiar scandal, but worth recalling since its effects are still with us, and Ravitch hits back at the empty standards by printing a long appendix with her own list of recommended books.

I am not sure how far Ravitch would agree that, bad as English is, the teaching of history is worse off and its wanderings still unsung. English has defined its subject matter so tolerantly that students themselves are puzzled to give it a better name than language arts. History has defined its subject matter so diffusely as to render the details unmemorable and the contours indigestible to any but a virtuoso. "The books," says Ravitch after reading a dozen textbooks on world history, "overflow with artwork from civilizations around the world, but they suffer from superficiality. It is highly unlikely that children can absorb so many different epochs and civilizations. It is equally unlikely that there are more than a handful of teachers or college professors who know enough about the history of the world to teach such a course well. Students would learn more if they could spend an entire year, or even a semester, studying one civilization in depth rather than skimming across the history of the world." Multimedia skimming may be taken to complete the effect. I know a tenth-grade history class in a private

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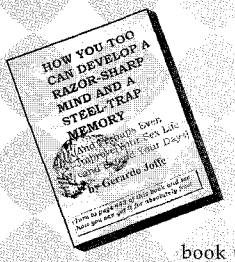

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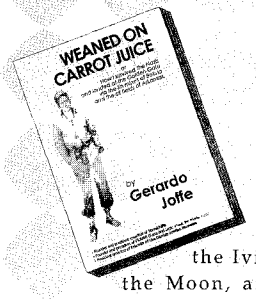

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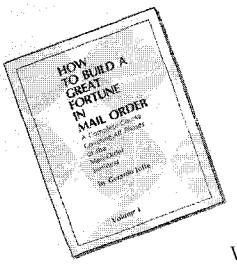

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school where the required reading on the Industrial Revolution was Michael Crichton's *The Great Train Robbery*. Most of a week in class was given to a showing of the movie of the book.

STILL, A DEBATE IS LURKING HERE, with more to be said on the other side than Ravitch will allow. The defender of world history might argue: "We want students to learn the variety of human life and the histories that have led people to the different societies we see in the world. The demonstration of variety should come first; nothing is more basic than that." A similar argument could be made in literature for the good of displaying—before you try to interpret anything—the structural range of the genres that have shaped the literature of many cultures. From this point of view, samples are just as good as works, and civilizations not learned in depth have value for showing the possibilities. But in the end I have to agree with Ravitch. Nothing in the study of literature matters more than helping a student to see that a work in words is something its maker built with care; and for every reader this discovery occurs in the reading of a single work, with a gradual and revelatory view of its internal relations. In the same way, nothing matters more in the study of history than helping a student to compare the motives and the consequences of a given course of action—the conquest of India by Clive in the 1750s and 1760s, the network of treaties that bound Europe on the eve of World War I, the permission given by the Kennedy administration for the assassination of Diem.

The textbooks, on the face of things, may seem rather aimless and slack, but as Ravitch notes they are tender toward certain pieties—chiefly the piety about piety. Cultural identity is a low-church superstition, taught by the few to propitiate the many, but who could have guessed this result: "The textbooks' treatment of religion is consistently reverential, even deferential; they seldom discuss the role of religious belief as a source of conflict. In their eagerness to show respect to all religions, the texts soft-pedal religious hatreds and the religious roots of many wars in history." This is a particularly American form of gutlessness.

Ray Bradbury, a non-pious writer, discovered in 1979 that in order to obtain class adoptions, his publisher "had quietly, and without his permission, removed 75 sections from *Fahrenheit 451*." Maybe it was the high Enlightenment message of that popular and affecting book that prompted the demand for so many cuts. The censors in the novel burn books. The censors who re-issue the novel only shred. They capitulate routinely because they begin by assenting to the premise that a work of fiction can be treated as pure content. If a woman in a drugged state watches reality television on a wall-sized screen, that is the author telling his readers that it is OK to take drugs. If a man acts courageously but fails to prosper, that is the author telling his readers that virtue is a hollow thing.

You may say for the Bradbury shredders that at least they began with a piece of real writing. Only eight states have English language-arts standards that so much as mention a work of literature; the best of these, according to Ravitch, are Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, and Mississippi—an oddly assorted group. Yet this shows that, when parents and teachers care enough, a curriculum can still be made. And it was never easy. Ravitch attended the public schools in Houston in the early 1950s, and in some of the most vivid pages in the book she relates her experiences there. During her junior year, a right-wing watchdog group called the Minute Women of the USA "wreaked havoc on the school system with a campaign of intimidation and name-calling." For a time these people "dominated the school board and used their control to toss out textbooks and humiliate teachers and administrators whose views offended them," Ravitch writes. "I don't think it is an overstatement to say that the Minute Women unleashed a reign of terror during their brief ascendancy." These people were the precursors of the Gablers, and of Tom DeLay. The Los Angeles public schools that I attended in the early 1960s were milder, but they still bore a traceable family resemblance to Houston. You were free to read *The Catcher in the Rye* if you brought a note from home.

IT IS SOMETIMES SAID THAT THE left won the culture war of the late 1960s and the right won the political war. I think that this is true; and that things would be better now if it had been the other way around. Our lawmakers have become less liberal than our institutions and laws. Our culture has become more libertine than its consumers. Why should the disproportion matter? There is less grating resentment in a society and less nagging annoyance when politics offers an outlet for reform and culture sets a conventional standard of restraint. Public thinking and speech in such a society have less need to resort to fantastic disguises. Educational censorship bears some of the blame for these distortions because it leaves students utterly unprepared for the moral battles that will confront them out of school. And here the obvious postscript must be offered. If the story Ravitch tells were pursued into higher education, the dominant force for censorship would be seen to swing leftward. Teaching is a smaller part of the reason than is generally supposed. More damage has been done by the elaborate dating protocols and the harassment rules, the speech codes and the sometimes enforced emphasis on appropriate speech.

A recent *New York Times Magazine* profile described the politics and the personal styles of some right-wing students on college campuses. The drift of the story was that these students see themselves as rebels: their manner is hip and defiant, their costume either dandyish or grungy and faded in the manner of left-wing students in the Free Speech Movement. I have encountered these students too. They are an unintended consequence of censorship from the left—just as the fiercest defenders of free love and socialism, for a generation or more, were an unintended consequence of the Catholic Church. Right-wing students today are passionate about ideas. Left-wing students are compassionate. In the narrow but formative setting of a college, it is the left-wing students who identify with the authorities.

To anyone who has studied or taught in America at any time before the last decade, nothing could be more surprising than this antithesis. And yet it sheds some light on the temper of politics in the country at large. What gave American political culture, in the Clinton years and after, the high coloring and the wildness of a masquerade was the credulity with which the actors sustained their school-time roles, the moderate established liberal and the violent excluded conservative, even when in political reality the balance of forces was quite otherwise. The left-wing personality of our time, a loser in politics but a winner in culture, is guilty and satisfied. The right-wing personality, a winner in politics and a loser in culture, is angry and resentful

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even at its moment of triumph. It is censorious and utterly uncensored.

The regime of censorship that has been part of secondary education since 1950 was begun in the Cold War years by people like the Minute Women. That the American left gradually added its weight to the repression was an intellectual disaster that took its greatest toll against the left. In political practice, liberals came to believe their own propaganda about unbiased speech, safe speech, polite speech. The new-model protocol left its mark on everyone from Geraldine Ferraro to Nancy Pelosi and from Michael Dukakis to Tom Daschle, everyone young enough to have been touched by the race and gender etiquette of the 1970s. It is possible that so many liberals today speak with a paralyzed blandness, even in response to the most demagogic calumnies, because they believe it is their duty not to create a hostile workplace. So a liberal lawmaker may criticize the president in these terms: "I was made very uneasy by the way the president spoke the other day about how we're going to keep soldiers in Iraq. It's going to be economically expensive, of course, but also emotionally and physically expensive for our soldiers who have to stay so long, in such unfriendly conditions. I don't think many Americans have a comfort level with that yet." What the liberal will never say is that a president who could use the words "Bring 'em on!" to strut his defiance of the killers of American soldiers was showing a heartless bravado peculiarly attractive to a man used to living through others.

To say it like that would be so insensitive, so biased. Not the least valuable element of Diane Ravitch's provocative book is a suggestion that emerges almost without the author's help. The voicelessness of the left that is so marked a feature of American political life today was partly self-imposed by complicity in the establishment of a regime of educational censorship. ■

David Thomson
I Leica Danger

BLOOD AND CHAMPAGNE: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ROBERT CAPA
By Alex Kershaw
(St. Martin's Press, 298 pp., $25.95)

ROBERT CAPA'S HAS ALWAYS been a knockout story, and nearly fifty years after his death it is as poignant as ever, but more pointed. He was only forty years old when he stepped on a mine in what was then Indochina. He had followed the wars of his times in Spain, in China, in Normandy and on the way to Berlin, in Israel, and in Vietnam. Beyond any dispute, he was brave, reckless, and led by an instinct for those split seconds when the dawn was enough to get an exposure and the explosions were spaced so that a photographer might just survive. He was also a man whose charm burned like a cigarette; a steady womanizer, beloved by men of action, soldiers, writers, hotel porters, and riffraff, too.

You can argue that Capa was a gambler who wanted to lose, but he spread fun, talk, and champagne wherever he went. You can say that he was a natural cameraman, a bravura character, or simply Hungarian, but just to behold the image of his wicked grin is to see the life force daring bad times to get worse. It is a marvel that no movie has splashed his life on the big screen, though Pierce Brosnan (who seems a touch too gentlemanly) is the latest in the long line of actors who have tried. Meanwhile there is a new ninety-minute documentary film, by Anne Makepeace, making the rounds. And, most important of all, we still have wars that gain their sharpest immediacy in one or two photographs—and where some other photographs begin to raise that tricky question, "Well, what is it exactly that we are being asked to see?"

Alex Kershaw's book is not the first study of Capa. Richard Whelan published an authorized biography in 1985, a longer and more thorough book that detailed nearly every photojournalistic

David Thomson is the author of THE NEW BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FILM *(Knopf).*

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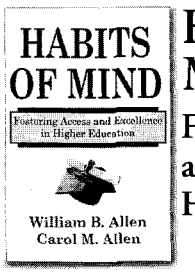

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William B. Allen and Carol M. Allen

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assignment that Capa undertook. But it was not as readable as Kershaw's book, which seizes on the speed and the verve of a great adventure story, and on the chutzpah of a gypsy Jimmy Cagney (as he was in 1933 in *Picture Snatcher*). Kershaw, a British journalist, is also the author of *The Bedford Boys*, a story about soldiers who went ashore at Omaha Beach in June 1944. He was not exactly welcomed by Cornell Capa, Robert's younger brother, who guards the extensive Capa estate—film and papers—at the International Center of Photography in New York. This does not seem to have hindered his research, for Kershaw has plenty of details that Whelan missed or ignored.

What is most interesting, and most distressing, is that neither book was allowed to include Capa's photographs. Yes, those works are published elsewhere, in books that benefit the estate and the Magnum Agency, which Robert Capa established and which Cornell Capa now protects. Still, for the novice—and Kershaw writes very much for the young person who may never have heard of Capa—it will seem mystifying that we get none of Capa's great pictures in books about the man. Even as I read this book, the travel section of the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a big Capa picture—one of his Omaha Beach series, taken in the early hours of June 6, 1944—to help promote calmer tourism in Normandy than was available on that day.

Much as Kershaw stresses the vitality of Robert Capa—the wit, the mischief, and so on—nothing illustrates those things better than the pictures. Nor do I simply mean the great Capa pictures—the D-Day shots, "The Falling Soldier" from Spain in 1936, or even the picture of a Parisian crowd in August 1944 in which a mob of citizens stare at a shaved woman collaborator in a fever of awe, fear, hatred, lust, and gossip. Cornell Capa may safeguard his brother's work, but he does it no service with this policy of restriction and discrimination. What is he afraid of? Who has ever had a bad word, or one that stuck, about the restless, mercurial Capa?

ROBERT CAPA WAS BORN IN Budapest on October 22, 1913. He came into the world with an extra little finger on his left hand (that was easily removed), a mop of black gypsy hair (never tamed), and the name André Friedmann. His mother was strong, his father was weak: he was a tailor, more impressed by wearing flashy clothes than by selling them, and a gambler. André grew up a poor student in a very turbulent world—Hungary lost two-thirds of its land after World War I, and under the new Horthy regime there were attacks on Jews and radicals, Friedmann's support groups. Kershaw does not speculate about this, but it is not hard to think that the happy-go-lucky guy might have become even more of a ladies' man and a gambler were it not for that small thing that he found to organize his life—a camera, a girl called Leica.

When he was eighteen André quit Budapest for Berlin, following his older sister Eva, who had already taken up the art of photography. From the first moment, Capa was a journalist with the camera. He loved its speed, its lightness, the way he might go right up to the jaws of outrage, accident, or miracle and catch it in one-thousandth of a second. Just as you might take years to find a face more inquisitive or watchful than Capa's, so he was plainly born for those decisive moments when the inner life lay naked on human surfaces. He nearly always shot people, the creatures of crisis, participants oblivious of the camera because there was a more pressing threat in their orbit—the animosity of others, bullets, an unfriendly shore.

As soon as he had acquired skill with the Leica, the world provided him with a brimming subject: the Spanish Civil War. Then, as if wanting to be a Hemingway novel, the war also threw up his perfect love, chum, and colleague in Gerda Pohorylles, a German, a Red, a sexpot, and a camera person. For a season in Spain, they worked together, drank champagne, made love, and nearly caught bullets in their teeth. In any movie, this passage could be the height of old-fashioned romantic cinema—or appalling junk. But they really lived like characters, and to prove it they took on new names—international or American, tough, terse, trademark names. They became Gerda Taro and Robert Capa. "Capa" is the Hungarian word for shark, apparently, and Capa also had the movie director Frank Capra in mind.

For a few months, they were married by their job, each of them getting some credit for the other's pictures. Then one day in 1937, clinging to the side of a car on the front lines, Taro was struck by some wandering tank (on the Republican side). There are always more idiot drivers than heroes. Her insides were torn out and she died within hours. Capa blamed himself. He said that he had urged her into the business of snapping lethal action, and then he was away in Paris on the day she was killed. He said he would give the whole thing up. And he began to drink in a way that never stopped. He did not give up photography, of course. He just kept going until fate found his bit of bad luck. But apparently he never took another woman seriously, though he did take them.

TARO'S DEATH BECAME A GREAT tragedy for leftist Europe, because she and Capa had become so famous. Their celebrity was due to the classic "Falling Soldier" picture, taken in September 1936. This is a picture of a militiaman falling backward on rough ground, as if just shot. His head is twisted; his rifle is leaving his grasp; his knees have buckled. The picture was published first in the French magazine *Vu* on September 23, 1936, and then in many other places, including *Life*, on July 12, 1937, where the caption read, "Robert Capa's camera catches a Spanish soldier the instant he is dropped by a bullet through the head."

Though the original negative was lost in the 1930s, this photograph is one of the images that came to stand for the tragic reality of war in the twentieth century. Though it served the Republican side, the soldier could belong to any cause. You can argue that the picture has the rough authenticity of something "snapped"; and you can say that it is also blessed by a superb, "natural" composition with the upright figure offset by the long horizontals of land and clouds in the sky. But how "natural" is composition in a practice that is meant to capture the moment?

Is the "meaning" of this picture anti-Franco, and then anti-war? Or is it just intensely for the moment, the one-thousandth of a second? It helped to raise money for the Loyalist side in the Spanish Civil War, and then it came to represent some philosophical point of view about war. Here is the tricky thing about some photographs: the longer the instant lasts, the more grand and abstract it becomes. But still it is only a picture. And if you know the speeds at which bullets and shutters move, you know this: that a man may need more

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An Independent Palestinian State

Would it be a peaceful neighbor of Israel or would it lead to war?

President Bush, prodded by the "international community" and in order to appease the Arabs, who are furious about our war against Iraq, has designed a "Road Map" for the Middle East, aided by the "quartet" of the U.N., the European Union and Russia. At the end of that road, presumably in 2005, an independent Palestinian state would arise as a peaceful neighbor of Israel.

What are the facts?

An aura of inevitability. The concept of a Palestinian state, which has by now acquired an aura of almost inevitability, is a fairly new and quite unjustified one. It is unjustified because there are no distinct "Palestinian" people—they are the same Arabs as those of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The concept of a Palestinian state came about after the Six-Day War in 1967. It is the product of unrelenting Arab propaganda and insistence. A Palestinian state never occurred to the Ottomans who ruled the area until their defeat in World War I, nor to the British when they had the mandate over Palestine until 1948, nor to the Jordanians who ruled the "West Bank" from 1948 to 1967. George Bush (father) declared "...In accordance with U.S. traditional policy, we do not support the creation of an independent Palestinian state." It is therefore difficult to understand why his son, our current president, would declare that it was "...a vision of longstanding U.S. policy to create a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River."

The thought that a Palestinian state next to Israel would be a peaceful neighbor is ludicrous. The stated purpose of the Arabs, endlessly repeated and never excised from their "covenant," is to acquire whatever territory they can, in order to use it as a base for the final assault against the Jewish state and for the hoped-for extinction of the hated "Zionist entity" once and for all. Even ten years after the ballyhooed Oslo Accord, the Palestinian Arabs still proclaim that "Palestine" would extend "from the river to the sea," which means that Israel would cease to exist, would be destroyed and absorbed by the new "Palestine." The State of Israel does not exist in Palestinian or any other Arab school books or on their maps. Tel Aviv does not exist. The Jewish holy places do not exist. The "West Bank" and Gaza are only the first step. They want it all!

"Palestine" demilitarized? Many, even those who concede the unrelenting hostility of the Arabs, contend that Israel would be in no existential danger from a Palestinian state because it could be made a condition of its creation that it be demilitarized, for a number of years or perhaps even forever. But those who propose that, know better, of course. Even today, as the Palestinians are under the severe weapons restrictions that they accepted in the Oslo Accord which allowed only a police force with light weapons, they have artillery, rockets, missiles and all kinds of heavy weaponry that they have smuggled into their territory. A ship laden with 50 tons of deadly weapons was intercepted by Israel in the Red Sea. Many shipments of arms have been intercepted in the Mediterranean; and there is a steady influx of arms through secret tunnels from the Sinai, which, in quest of peace, Israel has foolishly ceded to Egypt.

> House Majority leader Tom DeLay put it well when he said, "I can't imagine this president supporting a state of terrorists... The peace plan is a road map to destruction."

But the heavy weapons that "Palestine" would inevitably acquire, despite all solemn covenants to the contrary, aren't really necessary. With an independent Palestine in control of the Judean ridges, and with Israel only nine miles wide at what would be its narrow waist, heavy weapons would not be required to make life impossible in the truncated and mortally vulnerable Jewish state. Katyusha rockets, one of the Arabs' favorite weapons, would cover virtually all of Israel—impeding civilian life, industry, civil and military aviation, and, in case it came to that, mobilization of troops. The one million Arabs living in Israel as Israeli citizens would be a convenient and deadly fifth column, ready to spring into action. Israel would, of course, respond to any such attack. That would inevitably result in a major war, a war that would ultimately set the entire region on fire and would undoubtedly involve weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear ones. How can the world, how can the United States possibly promote such a project—a project likely to bring untold disaster to the world?

The Arab world is presently comprised of twenty-two states of nearly five million square miles and of one hundred forty-four million people. The greater Islamic world contains forty-four states with one billion people. Israel, with five million people, is smaller than Lake Michigan, smaller by half than San Bernardino County in California. There seems to be no need for another Moslem/Arab state, especially one that would certainly serve as an advance base for the ultimate destruction of Israel, the state of the Jews. How the President would promote the creation of a terrorist state, a state that without question would become a mortal enemy of the United States, and how he would countenance the inevitable destruction of the Jewish state, the only loyal ally of the United States and its only strategic asset in the area, is incomprehensible. House majority leader Tom DeLay put it well when he said, "I can't imagine this president supporting a state of terrorists... The peace plan is a road map to destruction."

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than luck to get the instant in which a person is unexpectedly shot.

In 1936, the general public was far less accustomed to such grim sights. During World War I there had been a ban on such photography in the media. I suppose it was reckoned in bad taste, too intrusive—and to this day we are spared (except on the Internet, of course) the few seconds in which Daniel Pearl's throat was cut. It seems that we are not ready for that. Not yet. But it is fairly clear that in the recent excursion in Iraq, during the rescue of Jessica Lynch, a good deal of that bit of "desperate" action was staged for television coverage. Which does not mean, of course, that Private Lynch was not rescued; and neither does Capa's picture image mean that a lone militiaman was not picked off a hillside in September 1936. Dare I say that in the picture the man falls back in a very plausible, very eloquent, very beautiful way? The picture has a "rightness" such as might move people and raise money. The body is not visibly damaged; we see no puff of blood, no tear in the white shirt. The slaughter is not nearly as drastic as that of Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway at the end of *Bonnie and Clyde* in their sexy slo-mo death from a thousand bullets.

What I am suggesting is not just that Capa's great shot is suspect, but also that by now, nearly seventy years after he took it, most photographs are vulnerable. This thought might have taken the great smile off Capa's face. The debate over "The Falling Soldier" has gone on for years, and there is no reason for it to be settled now. Kershaw (like Whelan before him) examines the case carefully, and fairly, and he is plainly struck by doubt. The most upsetting thing, you see, is that beneath the great picture *Vu* published another Capa shot of another falling soldier, in very much the same place at the same moment. (We know this from the clouds.) But it is a different soldier. It feels a little like a different take. And for years no one could put a name to the fallen militiaman.

In his authorized biography, Whelan spelled out the uncertainty and concluded: "The fact is that we shall probably never know exactly what happened on that hillside." It is proper to add that Whelan was already the co-editor (with Cornell Capa) of *Robert Capa: Photographs*. But the implication of control or direction stung—and many people moved by the picture are taken aback at any hint of contrivance, just as many people were ready to be devastated by the news, a few years ago, that Robert Doisneau's "great" photograph "The Kiss," taken in Paris in 1950, had employed models, staging, and even some rehearsal—as well as blurred motion, some objects out of focus, and the very appealing poetic notion that you may look up at any moment and see a couple kissing on the street. Yes, it looks like Paris in 1950, and it feels like impulse; but it might just as well be La France in fond eternity, a postage stamp, or an inducement to tourism.

Of course, Doisneau's picture itself never trembled or altered in the controversy. Only our susceptibilities wavered. What do we want from photography? And Capa supporters have rallied to his aid. In 1996, in the London *Observer*, Rita Grosvenor and Arnold Kemp wrote a piece that "discovered" that the militiaman in the picture was named Federico Borrell Garcia. Then in 2002, in *Aperture*, Whelan came back to the case in the spirit of a detective. He used Grosvenor's work and enlisted a homicide detective from the Memphis Police Department to opine that, yes, the man in the picture was really dead or dying and not an actor. This report wants us to share Whelan's estimate that "there can be no further doubt." I am not so sure.

Capa has never been charged with any crime, and he is in no need of vindication. Suppose he simply behaved like a professional photographer—which is very different from the weird Isherwoodian assertion that a man can be a camera. No, man has a harder role to play: he can be creative, he can have ideas, he can decide where to put the camera. Try as he may, he cannot actually be mechanical. Nothing is as suggestive of helpless intent as the proof (in *Vu* in 1936) that, within the space of a few minutes, Capa took two pictures from the same angle and with the same composition. The very same once-only mise-en-scène. For every ideal held about Capa as the endlessly motile photojournalist, darting here and there looking for the fleeting truth of life, he seems that day to have been possessed by an idea, a vision, an angle, a composition, a meaning.

Even Whelan's "clearance" in the case accepts the idea that a group of militiamen "decided to play about a bit for

Eurydice and Stalin

She crossed a bridge, and looking down she saw
The little Georgian boiling in a trench of blood.
He hailed her, and holding up his one good arm

He opened his palm to show her two pulpy seeds
Like droplets—one for each time she lost her life.
Then in a taunting voice he chanted some verses.

Poetry was popular in Hell, the shades
Recited lines they had memorized—forgetful
Even of who they were, but famished for life.

And who was she? The little scoundrel below her
Opened his palm again to show that the seeds
Had multiplied, there was one for every month

He held her child hostage, or each false poem
He extorted from her. He smiled a curse and gestured
As though to offer her a quenching berry.

On certain pages of her printed books
She had glued new handwritten poems to cover
The ones she was ashamed of: now could he want

Credit as her patron, for those thickened pages?
He said she was the canary he had blinded
To make it sing. Her courage, so much birdseed.

Shame, endless revision, inexhaustible art:
The hunchback loves his hump. She crossed the bridge
And wandered across a field of steaming ashes.

Was it a government or an impassioned mob
That tore some poet to pieces? She struggled to recall
The name, and was it herself, a radiant O.

ROBERT PINSKY

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the benefit of Capa's camera." He uses the word "pretending" and then supposes that a soldier who believed he was safe was suddenly cut down by a machine-gunner. This is how Whelan sustains the idea of "chance"—without ever allowing that design would make the picture more likely. But he still says nothing about the man in the second picture, and he fails to grasp its implications as to purpose. Nor does he explain why the sweeping machine gun did not hit Capa at the same time as it hit his nearby subject. Above all, Whelan ignores this question: there are two pictures, two deaths (or, at least, two woundings). If they occurred at virtually the same place and time, which came first—and how brave, or unlikely, was the second soldier once the enemy machine gun had declared itself?

SO WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS? It is possible that, having seen many people shot down and killed, Capa felt an intense urge to "get" such a moment. But then he realized the astonishing luck that this required—unless, truly, he was a camera that could take a picture as he saw a thing. So did Capa decide to re-stage what was not an uncommon event? If so, was that cheating? Or are we just very sentimental about the kind of "truth" that photography allegedly leads to?

A painter at the front lines could easily and legitimately paint a picture of a falling soldier. No one would object, if the painting was as strong as Capa's photograph. Nobody would cry deceit. Painting, after all, implies measured decisions regarding subject, size, composition, coloring, and so on. Why must photography be different? Is it so reliant on absolute fidelity to the moment? Or must we admit that, for a moment at least, Capa the journalist had become Capa the painter or Capa the novelist? If so, does that cheat the nature of photography or penetrate deeper than the happy faith in spontaneity?

On the other hand, consider a recent issue of the *National Enquirer*, the one that mentions a secret videotape of Bill Clinton in some furtive sex act, a tape that Hillary Clinton is supposed to be already very anxious to prevent seeing the light. The paper has a simulated frame from the video (they hardly grasp that video has no frames) with Bill's head and a bare, fleshy back. It could be mine or yours; or it could be Bill at the beach. It is referred to as "a composite," which I guess is the *Enquirer*'s shy way of saying that's what the video might look like.

Or consider the footage of Lynch's rescue—or even those pictures of supposed weapons of mass destruction that this country offered to the United Nations so recently. Times change, but they only seem to equip the deviousness of men with more skills. In 1962, the American government showed pictures of Soviet missiles being deployed in Cuba—or so the captions said. They could have been pictures of building blocks, but in 1962, I think, everyone trusted them. By 2003, trust has run dry. We always wonder if we are being conned, and in the years since 1962 or Capa, the range of the Leica or the U2 spy plane has been revolutionized by a thing called Photoshop, which may be more insidious than the weapons Capa photographed.

In essence, Photoshop or computer-generated imagery at the movies allows you to show as a photograph whatever you like. There are people in both fields sufficiently sophisticated to believe that they can still discern digitally altered images, but those people admit that not everyone has their sophistication. And these arts are still in their infancy. In other words, the single thing that was most special about a photograph for over a hundred years—its life-likeness (as witness our abiding and foolish faith in photo identification)—is gone.

On that day in 1936, I suspect, without knowing how or why, Robert Capa had taken one of the key steps that carried photography from a recording device to an intellectual or imaginative process. It does not seem to me a case of possible cheating so much as a proper appreciation of the nature of the medium. It remains for us to decide how moving, or important, photography can be if we do not trust its record.

AS THE SPANISH OVERTURE turned into full drama, so Capa became associated with *Life* magazine. He spent time in London; he knew Hemingway and Irwin Shaw; he had every pretty woman from Pamela Churchill down the line. And he pushed himself into a predictable position of the utmost peril: Omaha Beach on June 6. He was on a landing craft, using condoms to keep his camera and the film dry, creeping up to the shore under the Allied bombardment.

Capa's landing craft opened about forty minutes after the first attacking wave hit the shore. By his own account, he went into the water with the infantrymen in his craft: there are shots of these bulky figures wading to a shore maybe forty yards away. The German machine-gun fire was often intense and Capa joined with other Americans taking shelter behind some of the concrete obstructions that the Germans had built to slow landing craft. He made it to the shore and then, as he admitted, his nerve cracked. He went back into the water, and found a landing craft where he tried to re-load film in his cameras. But then a German shell hit the boat and Capa was suddenly covered with feathers from the kapok jackets of men blown to bits. He took a few more pictures of the shore, the bodies, and the wreckage floating there, and then he let the landing craft carry him to safety.

Capa admitted that he was running away. I suppose a soldier doing the same thing might have been rebuked and disciplined. But surely this should not damage the legend of Capa's bravery; indeed, it only enhances real valor to realize that it sits side by side with real terror. And in truth, many of the Omaha Beach pictures are unsteady or a little blurred—as if to show that the photographer is not in cool control. One of the disconcerting things about *Saving Private Ryan* (the opening of which was inspired by the Capa pictures) is that somehow in that din and in that rain of bullets Steven Spielberg's camera (and his crew) stands steady, stalwart, and dry to photograph the whole fast and bloody thing.

From the landing craft, Capa got to the *Samuel Chase*, a transport ship, and by the next morning he was ashore at Weymouth, on England's south coast. From there his rolls of films were couriered to London: those pictures had to reach New York by June 10 if they were to appear in the June 19 issue of *Life*. But in London the darkroom staff at the magazine bungled the rush job. Of the four rolls of film, three were useless—they were left so long in the drier that the emulsion turned to slime. The entire desperate shoot had provided

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only nine usable frames.

But we judge those Omaha pictures on the grounds of mere survival. The D-Day shots are not formally impressive or beautiful. They have many imperfections. And they all depend on the information in the attached caption: approximately, this is what it was like (or this is what a camera recorded) off Omaha Beach on the morning of June 6. The immediacy and the authenticity are everything. It is not that one would want to accuse Capa of cowardice, but if it emerged—I mean beyond a doubt—that those shots had been set up (if, for the sake of conjecture, you knew that Capa had taken them on the "set" of a film like *Saving Private Ryan*), then their value would be as definitely lost as the dead bodies floating in the sea.

There are "theres" in history of compelling power or importance, where integrity is everything. The Zapruder film, from Dealey Plaza in Dallas on November 22, 1963, does not need to be "good," but it is helplessly revelatory, and it has been as vital in shaping our cultural self-awareness as if we had twenty-five seconds on film of Shakespeare eating his lunch while writing *Hamlet*. It is in this context, I think, that one can recognize how far "The Falling Soldier" is a different kind of picture, one that reveals Capa as a partisan reporter more than an objective journalist. In Spain, he was swept along by emotion—being with Gerda, being part of her ideas. He was not a member of the Communist Party, but it is impossible to imagine him working on Franco's side of the lines. So, yes, there is a chance that Capa was photographing a man as he was shot (which means that he had decided to take the picture before the shot was fired). There is also a considerable likelihood that "The Falling Soldier" was made to fulfill an ideal and a purpose.

Oblique support of such a conclusion comes in the interview that Capa gave to the *New York World Telegram* in 1937. There Capa was said to have "automatically snapped his camera." Then, for two hours, he lay beside the corpse, until it was dark and safe to crawl away. In that case, when was the picture of the other militiaman, so similar, taken? But at the end of the interview Capa offers this comment, unprompted: "No tricks were necessary to take pictures in Spain. You don't have to pose your camera. The pictures are there, and you just take them. The truth is the best picture, the best propaganda."

In that last sentence we may find the battleground for every qualm over the contemporary use and abuse of tricked images to affect the way that audiences will think. It is interesting that Capa's mind had already identified the problem—despite his brave assertion of being unspoiled by it—and may even have been haunted by it. Capa was rueful enough to see how war had made him, and to feel cursed because of it. He was also blithely accepting of the way bullets took their fatal paths, just as darkroom idiots could destroy good luck with bad.

After the war Capa became a kind of celebrity, with Ingrid Bergman on his arm. Unhappily married, this most honest of actresses had a real life crammed with duplicity—Capa was only one of her lovers. But they were a couple, on and off, for a few years, and there is a fabulous picture taken in the ruins of Berlin in August 1945, of Bergman, wearing a head scarf, sitting in half a broken bathtub tossed out on the street. She is radiant with the moment, full of fun and charm amid all the destruction and male attention. Sounds like a Capa moment? Of course, except that Capa himself screwed up this "masterpiece" in the darkroom, and the only picture that survives is by another photographer, Carl Goodwin, who was following along a few steps behind them, photographing what Capa saw.

Though Capa was not unduly mercenary, still he needed money for champagne, the women's silk underwear that came back after the war, and life in hotels. He was also weary of the restrictions imposed by *Life* and the other magazines for which he worked. So he hit on the idea of an agency for his own favorite camera people, a kind of United Artists of still pictures. Thus Magnum came into being in 1947—the name was inspired by the champagne, of course—with a group that included Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Rodger, and David Seymour. It was a grand idea (like United Artists), but it carried with it the burden of office administration, which was never the shark's sport. The agency might have the advantage of collecting and caring for the photographers' prints, and organizing their use throughout the world, but Kershaw reckons that Capa sometimes dipped into agency funds to keep his gambling going. He became frustrated. He was by then an alcoholic—in a cheerful way—with equal addictions to sex and danger.

The postwar world had its dangers still, of course. Capa went to Israel, and a book resulted, done with Irwin Shaw. He toured the Soviet Union with John Steinbeck to collaborate on another book of reportage. But he was bored and he was broke: in *Holiday* magazine, he found himself giving tips to beginners on how to photograph snow. He was assigned to cover movie sets and fashion shows, and he had affairs with models as well as with Bergman. It may be that Bergman had a notion of divorcing her Swedish husband and marrying Capa. But he laughed at talk of marriage, and soon she was embarked on her scandalous liaison with Roberto Rossellini.

Alfred Hitchcock noticed the attraction and the tensions when Capa visited Bergman on the set of *Notorious*, and he used some of that mood in *Rear Window*, in which an avid action photojournalist (James Stewart) has such an eye for danger that he thinks he has seen a murder across the way in his Manhattan courtyard. He is a stricken witness, for he is laid up with a broken leg (suffered on some foolhardy photo shoot), and with a beautiful fashion-model girlfriend (Grace Kelly) trying to coax him into marriage, much against his "loner" instincts.

Capa was scared of middle age. He was no longer the kid who could sleep in a ditch without feeling it later. He was tired of being expected to stay up until three every morning playing poker. Irwin Shaw described his gaunt look upon waking and the way he had to prepare himself for those famous bars where the homeless are at home. The debonair grin had become a strain. In the new paranoia, there were passport problems and files that kept account of his Communist associations. He had lived so much longer than Gerda.

By the time *Rear Window* opened, Capa was dead. He had gone to Southeast Asia, and one day in May 1954, "embedded" with French troops near Thai Binh, he wandered off on his own to get a good angle on a line of soldiers and stepped on a land mine. A leg was blown off and his stomach was holed, but his Nikon camera flew through the air, its last images safe and intact and waiting to be developed. ■

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CORRESPONDENCE

Continued from page 5

such deception, distortion, or error—even in the personal attacks. In an attempt to embarrass, for example, he latches onto a fatuous quote attributed to me in *New York Magazine*, about how friends supposedly assure me that I will become secretary of state. The only problem is that the quote is entirely false, as I pointed out in a letter that *New York Magazine* (May 5) published without contradiction or dispute. The author of the piece corrected the mistake in a subsequent syndicated version of the article. Kagan might have discovered this with a little work had his goal been accuracy.

The review's most offensive aspect, however, is not its deceptive approach to facts, scholarship, or argumentation. It is the opening paragraph, where Kagan suggests that my views on democracy and liberalism are simply the product of my identity and experience as an Indian Muslim. As Kagan knows well, I am an American citizen and have been writing about a broad range of issues here for almost two decades, always with America's interests at heart. The insinuation that my ideas can be reduced to matters of religion or ethnicity is beneath contempt—but a perfect example of the dishonorable tactics that dominate Kagan's review.

FAREED ZAKARIA
Editor
Newsweek International
New York, New York

ROBERT KAGAN REPLIES:

In my review I argued that, despite Fareed Zakaria's professed aim to "reinvigorate" liberal democracy by noting the dangers of "illiberal democracy at home and abroad," at the heart of his thesis is an unmistakable hostility toward democracy itself. His preference at home is for a kind of aristocratic rule by elites; his preference abroad is for what he calls "liberal" autocracy.

In advancing this interpretation, I offered four broad criticisms of Zakaria's work.

First, that his indictment of democratic governance around the world is unfair and distorts the histories of several countries. For example, he blames the collapse of Indonesia's economy on democratization, although it occurred under Suharto's dictatorship. He blames democratization for the rise of radical Islam, although its initial promoters were dictators in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Indonesia. He erroneously blames democracy for the perpetuation of slavery in the United States and for ethnic conflict in the Balkans.

Second, that his term "illiberal democracy" is misleading and a device to discredit struggling democracies. He describes outright dictatorships in Belarus and elsewhere as "illiberal democracies" and then uses the same term to slander a truly democratic country, such as Argentina.

Third, that he evinces broad mistrust of "the people" as compared with their autocratic rulers. One of his heroes is Pervez Musharraf, who recently declared his Pakistani subjects unfit for democracy. Zakaria insists the Chinese people cannot be trusted with democracy because they are more "illiberal" than the tyrants who rule them.

Finally, I challenged Zakaria's premise that liberalism and democracy are entirely separate and distinct phenomena. This is simply not true in the modern world. Modern autocracies are not "liberal"; true "liberalism" can be found only in democracies.

Zakaria has chosen not to respond to these criticisms. Instead, he tries to recharacterize his argument by quoting himself selectively and out of context.

The chapter in which the "scholar in his eighties" is quoted, for instance, is all about the decline of leadership in the United States as a result of rampant democracy. In the past three decades, Zakaria argues, "something has gone seriously wrong with American democracy"; today's politicians "bow and scrape" before the people. The unnamed scholar's unfavorable assessment of today's political leaders supports his point, which is why Zakaria quotes it. He then distances himself from the scholar's "silly" nostalgia, but one paragraph later he returns to his (and the scholar's) theme: "So what has made the system decline?"

Similarly, Zakaria writes throughout his book of "liberal" autocrats and "military juntas" who "liberalized" their polities and then, "decades later, held free elections." He even compares them to Moses: The dictator "can lead his country forward, but he rarely makes it to the Promised Land himself." In his letter, however, Zakaria pulls a quotation from elsewhere in the text, suggesting that the dictators weren't like Moses after all. Zakaria thus tries to cover himself by contradicting himself, a device that plagues the book but does not hide his overriding theme.

There isn't space to demonstrate his use of selective quotations in the other instances he cites. I would encourage interested readers to get the book and judge for themselves. Suffice it to say that Zakaria's aim is to prove that "liberal" autocracies are better stewards of government in most developing countries than democracies, especially in matters of economics. He briefly acknowledges that the evidence does not support this claim, but he makes it anyway. As for the dangers to U.S. security posed by "illiberal democracy," Zakaria clearly argues that democratizing countries are more prone to conflict than dictatorships, that they have unleashed radical Islam, and "fomented nationalism, ethnic conflict, and even war." He calls international terrorism the "democratization of violence." Democracy, he insists, is dangerous and "must be made safe for the world."

On two points, I want to express regret. First, I did not search *New York Magazine*'s letters section while preparing the review and did not see Zakaria's disavowal of the embarrassing quotation.

I am also sorry that Zakaria found my reference to his experience as an Indian Muslim insulting. In his book, he writes movingly and at length about growing up in a changing India, in order to provide a compelling, firsthand account of the dangers of "illiberal democracy." Clearly this experience played some part in shaping his views, as it would anyone's—we are all immigrants or children of immigrants and are all affected by that history. If I believed Zakaria's experience was the *only* factor shaping his views, however, I would not have written 10,000 words to refute him. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Utmost

FOR MY SINS, AND TO ACQUIT myself of my duty to understand my country, I have been studying a Christian devotional. It is called *My Utmost for His Highest*, and George W. Bush is reported to read it avidly. The work is a series of small sermons, one for each day of the year—the Logos for busy people; and it was written by Oswald Chambers, a Scottish divine who founded a religious college in London in 1910 and became a YMCA chaplain in Egypt during World War I. Naturally I turned first to the illumination for September 11. I was startled to discover that it is called "Missionary Munitions." "We have to go the 'second mile' with God," Chambers counsels. "Some of us get played out in the first ten yards, because God compels us to go where we cannot see the way, and we say—'I will wait till I get nearer the big crisis.' If we do not do the running steadily in the little ways, we shall do nothing in the crisis." I began to hear the president's tone in religion.

CHAMBERS'S SPIRITUALITY IS INFATUATED with crisis. The year begins in a mood of apocalyptic excitation: "God's order has to work up to a crisis," he advises on January 1, and later he recommends "providential crisis" as a test of Christian manliness. March 19: "The life of faith is ... a life of walking not fainting." April 14: "If you have the whine in you, kick it out ruthlessly. It is a positive crime to be weak in God's strength." Military metaphors abound. Sports also refine the soul, especially in May. "May God not find the whine in us any more, but may He find us full of spiritual pluck and athleticism" (May 15); "Jesus Christ demands of the man who trusts Him the same reckless sporting spirit that the natural man exhibits" (May 30). Chambers's Christology was of its time, when Protestant writers in America hailed the virility of Jesus and Billy Sunday adored his Redeemer as "the greatest scrapper that ever lived." This was J.C. as T.R., and so a Son of God for our time, too.

ABOVE ALL, THE PRESIDENT'S DEVOTIONAL is an extended assault on the legitimacy of doubt. "[W]hat an impertinence worry is!" Chambers exclaims on January 2. And two days later, impertinently still worried about worry: "If there is the slightest doubt, then He is not guiding." A few weeks later, on January 30, Chambers advises Bush, in a grim prophecy of the Department of State under Colin Powell, "Never ask the advice of another about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will nearly always side with Satan." For February 28, there is this: "[W]hen we do anything in obedience to the Lord, there is no argument possible"; and for April 16: "Never revise your decisions"; and for April 19: "Do not be morbidly introspective." Good night, Laura. Good night, George.

I DO NOT MEAN TO MOCK, EXACTLY. IT is a fine thing to have a president who believes in something, and not (like Bush's father) in nothing or (like Bush's predecessor) in everything. These days the belief in truth is a public service. Is it the wrong truth? Perhaps; but the possibility of believing in something wrongly disturbs me less than the impossibility of believing in anything rightly, which is what much of American culture, high and low, now preaches. Anyway, God has always haunted the White House. (George Bush is certainly not more religiose than Jimmy Carter.) And about the genuineness of Bush's convictions there can be no doubt. Yet Bush's godfulness annoys me. I do not fear that one dark day the church will usurp the state at the White House; the American order is not so easily demolished, and the president often acknowledges, as he did at the National Prayer Breakfast last year, that "many of our good citizens profess no religion at all," and that "respect for the dignity of others can be found outside of religion, just as intolerance is sometimes found within it." It is the numinous John Ashcroft, rather, who makes me sometimes tremble for my country.

BUT I AM NOT ENTIRELY PERSUADED BY the president's disclaimers about the conflation of morality and religion. For he mistakes them all the time. "Faith shows us the reality of good and the reality of evil," he remarked over the same sacred breakfast. "Some acts and choices in this world have eternal consequences." I wonder what he meant by eternity. As an illustration of the clarifying power of faith, Bush adduced "the men and women who charged into burning buildings to save others [and] who fought the hijackers." They "were not confused about the difference between right and wrong." But surely all the rescuers of Americans at home and all the defenders of America abroad were not devout. They did not need to be: Their courage could find secular springs. It was one of the great accomplishments of modern culture to detach moral feeling from religious feeling, so that the ideal of justice would not remain captive to the more imaginative and less rational features of the religious picture of the world. And the distinction between religion and morality is as much an interest of religion as it is an interest of morality, if metaphysics is not to be flattened into ethics and the poetry of revelation into the prose of reason.

BUSH'S FAITH IS EMPHATICALLY NOT A religion of reason. Indeed, his style of piety has the consequence of making religion look stupid. In his address of consolation after the destruction of the space shuttle, the president said that "the crew of the shuttle Columbia did not return safely to earth, yet we can pray that they are all safely home." There was no mention of a celestial old man with a great white beard, but the coarseness of the conception was evident. Bush's most embarrassing quality is his derision of doubt. ("If we are wrong ...": What a relief it was to hear Tony Blair pronounce those words in this city!) A contempt for doubt is a contempt for thought, and a strange humility. And in his comment against gay marriage, Bush again exposed the limitations of his religious idiom. "Yeah, I am mindful that we are all sinners," he said in a spirit of inclusion—but those are not sinning Americans, those are gay Americans. The Constitution does not know sinners. And the religious vocabulary of inclusion frequently excludes. The defense of the strictly heterosexual construction of marriage is looking more and more like a defense of the sanctifying power of the state, which is ludicrous. I can grasp why the president of the United States seeks the support of Jesus, but I cannot grasp why Jesus seeks the support of the president of the United States.

LEON WIESELTIER

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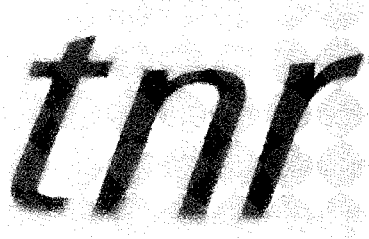

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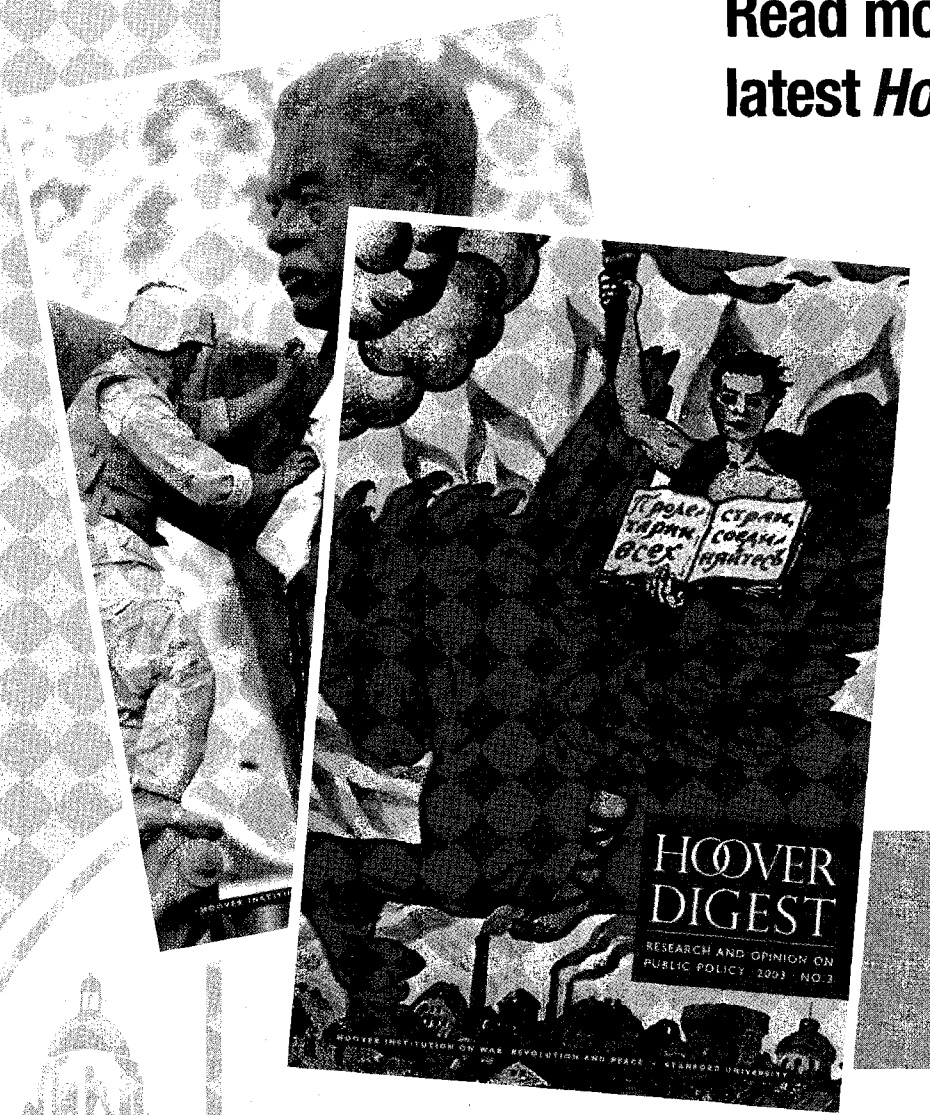

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